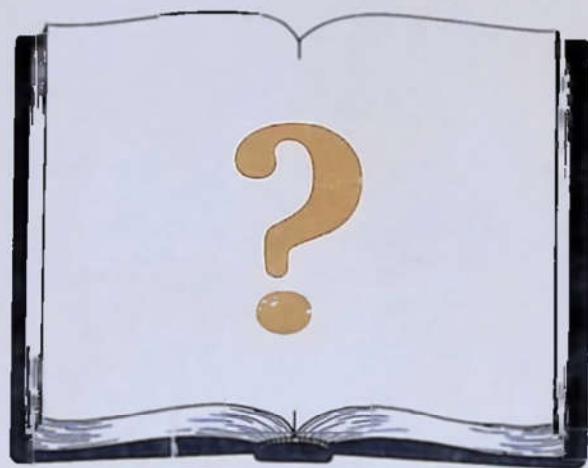


DIRECT
ANSWERS
TO
DIFFICULT
QUESTIONS



Dr. Fred G. Stevenson

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Texarkana, Texas

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by Fred G. Stevenson

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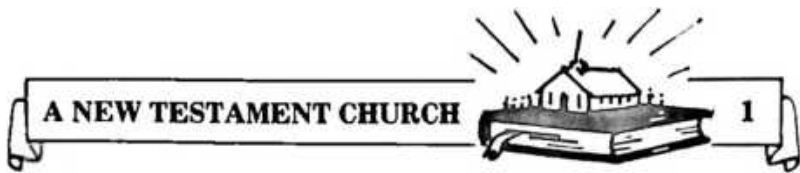
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“What is the significance of belonging to a New Testament church?”

A New Testament church is not just any group of religious people, nor is it just any group of saved people. Coming into church membership is not a part of the process of salvation, as many people believe today.

There were multitudes of people saved from Adam to Christ. The church had no part in their salvation, for it did not exist at that time. Neither did belonging to any other religious group contribute to their salvation.

The church was formed very early in the ministry of Jesus (John 1:35-37; John 2:1, 2). It was composed of people who were saved under the ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1, 2), and they were baptized by being immersed in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:5, 6). They were saved before they were baptized, but they solemnly committed themselves to serve the Lord according to His Word in their baptism (Romans 6:4; I Corinthians 10:1-4, 11).

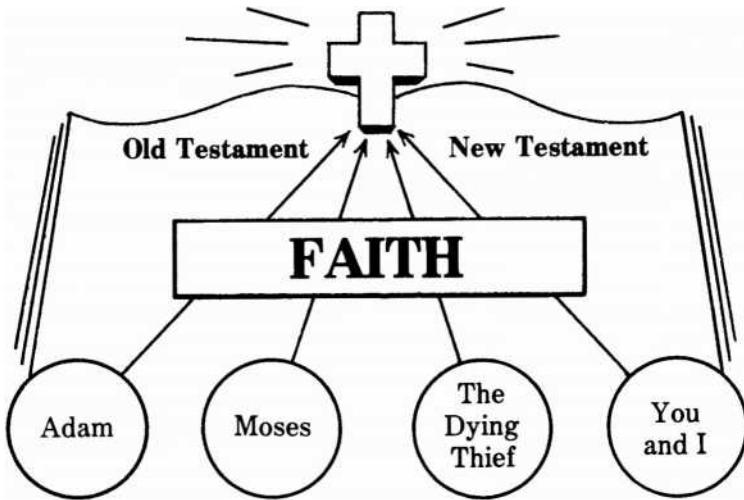
A church is a group of saved people who believe the Bible is the Word of God and that the New Testament is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Rules of life and conduct change from one age to another in the Bible; for instance, Israel had the law of Moses from Moses to Christ, and the church has the New Testament as its rule from Christ to the end of the church age.

Some Bible doctrines never change:

The doctrine of the total depravity of man has always been true since the fall of Adam back in the garden of Eden (Romans 3:23).

The doctrine of salvation by grace never changes. (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The doctrine of eternal security, that is, “once saved always saved,” never changes (John 5:24).



THE PLAN OF SALVATION HAS NEVER CHANGED.

The Bible discusses in varying detail a thousand and one different subjects, but its essential story is the creation, the fall, and the redemption of the human race.

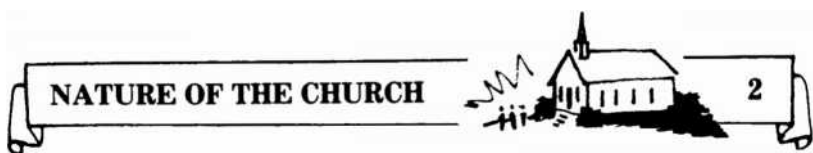
The real church member commits himself to stand fast on the essential doctrines and practices of the New Testament. In so doing, he confesses that Christ has given him a wiser and more righteous rule of life than he is able to devise for himself. Every teaching, every ordinance, and every observance in the Scriptures is intended to impart to us some element of detail of divine truth. If we neglect or reject any of these details, we contribute to the warping of the Bible pattern of God’s truth and righteousness. In other words, we begin to misrepresent God instead of rightly conceiving of Him ourselves and rightly

presenting Him to the world. And, since Jesus left, the church is supposed to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

There will be differences among the saved both in the Millennium and in Heaven. The former is clearly set forth at Matthew 19:28. In substance, this says that the faithful will reign with Jesus in the Millennium. Ephesians 3:21 states there will be glory to Christ in the church forever. This certainly implies the faithful church will have an identity as such forever.

So far as salvation is concerned — that is, the new birth — one saved person is as much saved as any other. Furthermore, all the saved will be finally and fully prepared for Heaven in the resurrection and in the Millennium. In these senses, all the saved will be equal in Heaven. But there are two things which nothing will ever change. First, if we have led sinners to salvation, we will have them for companions forever. If we have not led sinners to Christ, we will not have this companionship.

Second, if we have been faithful to the Word in this life, the time of testing, nothing will ever change that fact nor the manifestation of it in eternity.



“Is there a universal, invisible church? If not, why not?”

The first difficulty that arises in dealing with this proposition is the fact that it is stated in the negative rather than in the positive. That is, if there is a universal, invisible church, then those who hold to the idea of its existence should prove the idea.

Instead of doing this, such authorities as Dr. C. I. Scofield, prominent Protestant scholar and editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, begin by assuming there is such a thing as a universal, invisible church composed of all the saved in all the religious denominations. This assumption is based on another one which will not stand in the light of strict Bible investigation. It is the assumption that Jesus instituted a new plan of salvation when He came into the world. If this is not true, then it is hard indeed to understand what Scofield means by his note on John 1:17. He seems to say the law was Israel’s plan of salvation and that grace is a new plan of salvation introduced by Jesus when He came into the world. He seems also to suggest that a saved person will do the will of the Lord in all essential doctrinal matters. This point is where real Baptists part company with the Protestant world in general. True Baptists believe there are many saved people who live in doctrinal disobedience all their lives; and, they are constantly taught to do so by their religious leaders. Scofield cites Matthew 16:18 as a scripture teaching the universal, invisible church, composed of all the saved. This verse actually refers to the sum total of all the local churches throughout the church age which conform to the doctrines and practices set forth by Jesus and the apostles. And, these doctrines and practices are requisite for those who would be recognized as true churches.

Let us note briefly what the New Testament teaches concerning the church. The Greek verb *kaleo*, from which the noun *ekklesia*, “church” comes, is used about two hundred times in the New Testament. This verb means “to call.” It is used for calling a name denoting character of works. At Matthew 1:21, an angel tells Joseph he should call the son to be born to Mary “Jesus,” for He should save His people from their sins. Jesus means “savior,” and He was to be called a name in harmony with His office. The idea is that *kaleo* means to call with reference to a specific purpose.

Again, the verb *kaleo* is used at Matthew 4:10-20, where Jesus called four of the apostles — not to go anywhere and do just anything — but to follow Him, and He would make them fishers of men. They were called for a specific work to be done in carefully prescribed ways (Matthew 10:5-7).

When we consider the Greek word *ekklesia*, “church,” we also find we are dealing with people who have met specific requirements as opposed to those who have met some vague, nebulous kind of religious requirements. *Ekklesia* is used one hundred fifteen times in the New Testament. Three times it refers to the meeting of a town council where it is rendered “assembly” (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). It designates a specific group who have come together in response to a call for the purpose of transacting specific business. This is a far cry from that vague, non-existent, imaginary thing called the universal, invisible church.

Ekklesia is translated “church” one hundred twelve times in the common version of the Bible. Of these, two deserve special note. At Acts 7:38, “church” refers to the assembly of Israel in the wilderness. Though Israel was a type of the church, being a called-out group, Scofield himself admits they were far from being like the New Testament church.

Hebrews 12:23 refers to the church of the firstborn-ones enrolled in Heaven. This means no more nor less than the church saints who have already died and have gone on to Heaven to be with the Lord. All the other references to the church or churches have to do with the church in one of two definite ways.

Fifteen times, beginning with Matthew 16:18 and ending with Hebrews 2:12, the word *ekklesia*, “church,” is used in the institutional sense. That is, it refers to any or all churches recognized by the Lord without specifying any particular one of

them. It is as when we speak of “the horse” not meaning any particular horse, but simply any or all horses as distinguished from other species of animals. In this figure, making all saved people, or all religious people, constitute the church would be like making all four-legged animals constitute the horse family merely because they have the common quality of walking on four legs. The universal church no more exists in New Testament teachings than the absurdity of making all religious people in Old Testament times to belong to the commonwealth of Israel. Israel is held in contrast with the rest of mankind in Old Testament times; likewise, the religious bodies which follow the doctrines and practices of Christ and the apostles today are the ones which the New Testament recognizes as churches. To say one religious body is as good as another is equivalent to saying Jesus should have accepted the Pharisees into His church just as they were; but, He did not do so although they were very religious in their way (Luke 11:42).

About ninety-five times “church” or “churches” is used in the sense of local congregations. The first of these references is at Matthew 18:17 and the last is at Revelation 22:16. In preparing the material for the body of Christ, the church, John the Baptist did two things: (1) he preached repentance to all the people, and (2) he baptized those who received his message by immersing them in the Jordan River (Mark 1:4, 5). Further proof that baptism was required of those who would become church members is given at Acts 1:21, 22. Acts 19:1-7 is meant to teach us that sincerity and good intentions are not enough to make us legitimate church members. We must be technically right as well as being sincere. These people had been “dipped” by Apollos, who had no authority to administer the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-26). Only when they were baptized by Paul under the authority of the Antioch church (Acts 13:2-4) did they receive the blessings and gifts to the church (Acts 19:4-6).

Thus, the only kind of church which the New Testament recognizes is a group of saved people (John 3:3, 5) who have committed themselves in baptism to walk in the ways that the Lord has prescribed; the type being at I Corinthians 10:1-4 (Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:27). Every one of these scriptures indicates there is a solemn commitment in scriptural baptism to walk with the Lord in all His ways. We have allowed baptismal-regeneration folks to “scare” us away from the glorious truth.

The great commission should teach us once and for all the kind of church the New Testament recognizes. It says to make disciples (Matthew 28:19, 20). A disciple is a learner who fully accepts and acts on what he learns.

It says to baptize the disciples who are made. The whole New Testament teaching is that baptism is immersion in water of a saved person (Acts 8:35-38). John received authority to baptize from Heaven. Jesus also received authority from God; see Matthew 28:18, where the word “power” is really “authority” in the Greek text. Jesus authorized the church to baptize strictly under the prescriptions of the New Testament. The church is the only body which has the commission to baptize and to administer the laws of Christ in general. So, scriptural baptism must be done under the supervision of a church — else it is not real baptism at all.

Then the church is commanded to teach disciples all things which the Lord has commanded — no more and no less. Our religious activities are strictly enumerated and prescribed by the Scriptures; therefore, those who “teach for doctrine the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9) cannot be operating in the area of legitimate churches.

No, the universal, invisible church is simply an invention of Protestantism to cover up the shame and embarrassment of their modern origin as the inventions of men.



“Are the church and the bride the same? Are the bride and the new Jerusalem the same? Is the new Jerusalem the city for which Abraham looked? Will Abraham and the other patriarchs be in the new Jerusalem?”

As we consider the subject of the church, the bride of Christ, and the new Jerusalem, it will be necessary for clearness to mention some prevalent ideas on it. The most common idea is that all the saved, or even all the religious people, constitute the real, the universal, the spiritual church. This idea is foreign to the Scriptures, and it was concocted by Protestant scholars to cover up the embarrassment of their modern origin as religious denominations. All of them lack fifteen hundred years being old enough to be the church that Jesus founded in person while He was in the world. Jesus says to the true church at Matthew 28:20, “. . . Behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age.” Jesus could not be with them “all the days” if they did not come into existence until fifteen hundred years after he had begun His church.

There are certain qualifications which a member of a true church must meet:

(1) He must be saved by repentance and faith. John came to prepare the people of whom Jesus formed the church, and Matthew 3:2 tells us the burden of His message was that the people should repent. At Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer that he should believe on Jesus Christ and he would be saved. Joining the church does not save anyone, but it puts saved people in the only place where they may serve the Lord in a fully acceptable manner. One can get his name on a church roll without being saved, but he cannot be a real church member without having been born again.

(2) In order to enter into the spirit of church membership, one must solemnly commit himself to walk by the letter and the spirit of the New Testament scriptures. In the third chapter of Luke, John impressed upon the people that there were some things to be forsaken and some things to be embraced when one commits himself to church membership. The testimony of a changed life is the most effective testimony that a church member may bear before the world.

(3) To be a real church member, one must have submitted himself to scriptural baptism. This is immersion in water of a saved person who by his baptism is committing himself to a new life. Before the Israelites were typically baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (I Corinthians 10:1-4), they might have very readily returned to Egypt with its bondage; but afterward, it would be virtually impossible for them to return to the same status they had before their leaving Egypt. They must either go on with Moses to the promised land, or they must die in futility in the wilderness. This is not an implication that they might have fallen out of salvation, but it is a fearful warning that saved people may live their lives in vain so far as being a right testimony is concerned.

Commitment of oneself to church membership is such a serious thing that apparently one does not do it but once in his lifetime. When one walks in a way that is unworthy of church membership, the church withdraws church fellowship from him; see I Corinthians 5:4, 5. Apparently, this same man was restored to church fellowship without being rebaptized (II Corinthians 2:6-8). This is in full harmony with the common practice of Baptist churches. We exclude them from fellowship when they sin, and we restore them to fellowship when they repent. Only when one testifies he was not saved when he was baptized is he rebaptized, considering his first baptism to be invalid.

Those who constitute the bride of Christ are likewise church members who meet certain qualifications. As a general statement, we may say the members of the bride are church members who live up to the commitment they make entering into the church. It is suggested that when one meets all the qualifications for church membership, he is at that time accounted as a member of the bride of Christ. If he should die

at that moment, he would have a position in the bride. But for people who live over a period of time after they enter into the bridal relationship, continued faithfulness is required. A position in the bride is evidently what is promised to those who continue with Jesus in temptations; see Luke 22:28-30. John 6:64 refers to Judas, who betrayed Jesus. He had never been saved; therefore, he had never been a real disciple — only an outward conformer. But those who turned back at John 6:66 may very well have contained some who were saved, but they decided the way was too hard for them to continue in it. They would correspond to the typically saved Israelites who fell in the wilderness. None of them lost salvation, but they lost the blessings they might have had in life and a reward in the life to come. Faithfulness involves such an infinite number of details that only an infinite God is capable of rightly estimating who is worthy and who is unworthy to be accounted a position in the bride. Of course, all of us can see about us those who notoriously despise the opportunities that are theirs. It seems we are justified in reckoning them to be unworthy of the bridal relationship.

As to the new Jerusalem, we may sum it up as follows:

(1) Galatians 4:26 — The heavenly Jerusalem is the present abiding place of God, the holy angels, and the spirits of all the departed saved; see also Revelation 6:9-11.

(2) Hebrews 11:10-16 — The heavenly Jerusalem is the city for which Abraham and other saved people look. It is the place where our spirits go when we die.

(3) Hebrews 12:22 — Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Jerusalem is the place where our spirits may go in communion, meditation, and worship. This is a special blessedness that church saints have over those who have lived in previous dispensations. Before one denies this, let him explain what Hebrews 11:40 means in the light of its context.

(4) Hebrews 13:14 — The continuing city which we seek is the same one for which Abraham looked.

(5) In the last two chapters of Revelation, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down to abide on an earth which has been completely renovated with every trace of sin removed. This is the eternal home of all the saved.

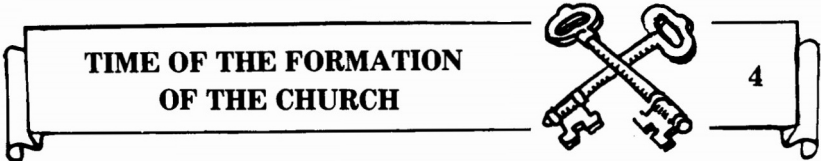
In summary, the church, institutionally speaking, is made up of all the legitimate members of all scriptural churches. Scriptural churches are only those which have the Scriptures as the basis of their doctrines and practices. Some of the members are faithful in service and some are not.

The bride of which John spoke at John 3:29 is that group of church members who follow Jesus in all His doctrines and practices. They were found literally following Jesus when He was in the world; since He left the world, they are found following His teachings and practices. The marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven immediately after the judgment of the saved. It amounts to the faithful of the church age being joined to Christ in a special relationship for the Millennial reign (Matthew 19:28).

In the Millennium, all the saved are fully and finally prepared for the Heaven ages. All are forever in complete harmony with God. If we have led souls to the truth in the present world, nothing will ever change that fact; if we have not stood faithfully for the truth in the present life, nothing will ever change that fact either. So, we see that in one sense there will be equality in Heaven; in another sense there never will be equality.

The heavenly Jerusalem is now the home of God, the holy angels, and the spirits of all the dead saved. It will come down to the recreated earth at the end of the Millennium and the beginning of the eternal ages of the future. It will be the eternal home of all the saved, but the two covenant peoples, Israel and the church, will retain their identity as such forever (Revelation 21:10-14).

The works of God among mankind have always been two-fold: First, to get all the people possible saved; second, to call out and maintain a people who will continue to bear faithful testimony to the truth of God. The two peoples with and through whom God has worked especially are, of course, Israel and the church.



TIME OF THE FORMATION OF THE CHURCH

4

“In relation to other matters, just when did Jesus form the church?”

There seems to be a rather widespread idea among Baptists that the church of Jesus Christ had its beginning with the calling out of the twelve apostles. The account of this out-calling is given at Mark 3:13-19. This was far too late in the ministry of Jesus to be accounted as the beginning of the church.

Let it be stated in beginning that much reliance is placed on the harmony of the gospels as this subject is discussed. A number of very capable men have devoted most of their lifetime to studying and arranging the four gospels in the order which these men think the various events in the ministry of Jesus occurred. Their opinion generally is that the books of Mark and John follow the time order almost without exception; whereas, Matthew and Luke follow a logical sequence without a great deal of regard to the chronological order in which the events took place.

One result of this regrouping of the gospels is the conclusion that the apostles were chosen about two years after the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, rather than soon after the beginning of that ministry. The church had been in existence for almost two years before the apostles were set in it. A few high points in the ministry of Jesus are given as follows:

He went from Galilee to Jordan and was baptized by John (Mark 1:9). He was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit where He was tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12, 13). He returned to Judaea for a short time and gathered several disciples (John 1:35-43). He returned to Galilee, where He attended the Marriage feast at Cana (John 2:1, 2). He went to

the Passover feast in Jerusalem as recorded in the second and third chapters of John.

At the Passover observance, Jesus was opposed by the Jewish religious leaders because He cast the money changers out of the temple. He had meant to convince these very people that He was the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken. The ones who should have received Jesus most readily raised the quibble of where He got the authority to cast the money changers out of the temple.

After this incident, Jesus returned to Galilee, and during the next year He ministered to the common people of the Jews. There was also some hint that He would later give the gospel to people of other nations. That is, He saved the Samaritan woman and He healed the son of the nobleman in Capernaum. It is assumed this nobleman was of a nation other than Israel.

During this year, Jesus called the disciples Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew (Mark 1:16-20; Mark 2:13-17). He would make them fishers of men, but it does not appear they went on any preaching tours at this time.

Jesus then went to the second Passover after the beginning of His ministry. At this time, He found the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16). He healed the man. This man aptly depicted the remnant of the nation of Israel as being prone and helpless politically, economically, and spiritually. He hoped the religious leaders would realize that He could and would heal them as a nation if they would only accept Him. But, they raised the quibble that He healed the man on the Sabbath day. Thus, He was a great sinner according to them.

He returned to Galilee heartbroken after this encounter in Jerusalem. At this time, He called and ordained the twelve apostles (Mark 3:13-19). He preached the sermon on the mount which was the great initiatory sermon to the church (though there had been a church for almost two years at the time); see Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7. Through this year He ministered to the masses of the people, and He performed many miracles which were intended to convince them that He was the Messiah who was to come to Israel.

It appears that Jesus did not go to the third Passover of His ministry; rather, some believe He was away to the north on the border of the Gentiles, preaching the sermon on the bread of life while the feast was being kept in Jerusalem (John

6:22-7:1). Shortly after this, Jesus began to speak boldly about the church and the church age (Matthew 16:13-17:13).

This has been outlined to show that Jesus had disciples long before He called the twelve apostles.

The word “disciple” is used about 275 times in the gospels and Acts. Wherever it can be determined, the disciples of Jesus were baptized saved people who had committed themselves to walk after Him strictly according to the rules which He laid down. It is not believed that any other view can be successfully established. There is no universal, invisible church in the New Testament.

The first time the followers of Jesus were designated as disciples is at John 2:1 where He and His disciples were called to the marriage celebration in Cana of Galilee. However, the first account of men’s following Him is told at John 1:35-51. Four of these were Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and one who is not named. Because John did not usually mention his own name, it is suggested this fifth disciple was John. This was soon after the baptism and the wilderness temptation of Jesus, and it was before the first Passover that He attended after the beginning of His ministry. I believe that all of these were men who had been saved, and they had been baptized by John the Baptist. They were fully prepared for church membership.

At Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus lays down some rules that are to prevail in the church. Among other things, He says that where two or three of them are assembled in His name He will be in their midst. That is, it requires only two or three members to constitute a church. He also gives binding and loosing authority into the hands of such a group. This has to do with binding and loosing as to church membership.

It should be noted that John the Baptist was far more strict in the demands he made of those who came to be his disciples than most preachers and churches are today. Let us note some details:

(1) John preached repentance, and he baptized those who repented (Matthew 3:1-6).

(2) He refused those who did not give evidence of having repented (Matthew 3:7-9). He refused some though they were children of Abraham.

(3) John demanded the rejection of the old manner of life and the embracing of a new manner of life. This was aimed especially at the Jewish religious leadership since they practiced a hypocritical, ceremonial type observance of the law of Moses (Luke 3:7-14).

(4) At Mark 1:4, it is stated that John preached a baptism of repentance unto the taking away of sins. At Acts 2:38, Peter told the congregation of Jews that every one of them should repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins. The goal was that they might receive what the church had received on Pentecost, which was a special gift of the Holy Spirit. This was a gift to the church — and to the church alone. So they must come out from where they were, be saved if they were not already saved, and be baptized to get into the church, where the gift of the Holy Spirit was. This is a good place to observe that if it is right to be a member of a scriptural church, it is wrong not to be.

As we think of the formation of the church, we should note its type in the building of the temple under the Old Testament economy. The account is given in the sixth chapter of First Kings. The materials were prepared with great exactitude back in the mountains of Lebanon. This typifies people who are saved, and who have committed themselves to walk according to the New Testament pattern. If we wish to go a little to the extreme in dealing with our types, we may say these materials were baptized in their being transported through the water to near Jerusalem. Then, each piece so exactly fitted into its place, “. . . that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building”(I Kings 6:7).

When the apostles were called, they were set in the church (I Corinthians 12:28), which already had been in existence almost two years.



“Please explain the significance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. Are individual people baptized in the Spirit today? When? How? Why?”

Most New Testament doctrines and practices are set forth in types and shadows in the Old Testament. This is pre-eminently true to the working of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament church. The nation Israel was the covenant people of God from Abraham until Christ. Exodus 13:21, 22 tells us that the Lord went before Israel in a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire throughout their wilderness journey. They had Moses to speak the Word of God to them and they had the pillar of cloud to go before them. Today, we have the Scriptures to instruct us, and we have the Holy Spirit to guide and enlighten our understanding.

I Corinthians 10:1, 2 says all Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. I Corinthians 10:6-11 and I Corinthians 1:2 say these things happened to Israel as examples or types to the church. In their typical baptism, they not only renounced Egypt, but they put a barrier between themselves and it. Also, they were baptized “unto” Moses, meaning they committed themselves to walk after Moses to the land of promise. Baptism means more than we have given it credit for. In baptism we not only renounce an old way of life, but we also solemnly commit ourselves to the new way of life in the New Testament church.

Let it be observed that Israel was typically baptized in water and in the Spirit at the same time. We shall have occasion to recall this later.

John the Baptist came fulfilling a two-fold mission. He preached repentance to all the people, and he baptized those who repented by immersing them in the Jordan River. Before

baptism he demanded that they show fruits of repentance (Luke 3:8). The unsaved should repent unto salvation, and the saved should repent of such things as Pharisaism, Sadduceism, etc. Then, they should identify themselves with the group who were looking for the imminent coming of the Messiah.

John the Baptist promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit on his disciples (Mark 1:8). A disciple is a learner who fully embraces what he learns. Therefore, John promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit on water-baptized saved people — and on no one else!

People had been born of the Spirit since the days of Adam. The Spirit was nothing new in this respect. Jesus had been begotten by the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit was nothing new in this respect. But, at John 7:37-39, Jesus promised a new office of the Spirit after he should be glorified.

At John 14:16-18, Jesus promised that the Spirit would come to take the place left vacant when Jesus should leave the church. The Spirit would come as a comforter and abide throughout the age. Thus, the church would have both an instructor in the Scriptures, and a leader in the Holy Spirit just as Israel had both Moses and the pillar of cloud.

At John 16:7-15, the promise is renewed and given in greater detail that the Spirit would come in this special office to take the place of Jesus in the church. It would glorify Jesus and guide the church into the way of all truth. It is in this guidance that true churches have the precedence over other religious bodies.

At Acts 1:4, 5, 8, three specific things are said to the church: (1) They should remain in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father should be fulfilled. (2) Those who had been baptized in water by John should be baptized in the Holy Spirit before many days should pass. (3) They should receive power when the Holy Spirit was come upon them to bear witness of Christ from Jerusalem to the end of the earth.

It is clearly evident that all the previously mentioned promises were fulfilled on the church on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-8). They had the great commission, and the world needed the gospel as badly as it ever had, but they were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

They were all of one accord in the common experience of the new birth. They were all of one accord in their having

committed themselves in baptism to walk with the Lord wherever He should lead them. This was not a haphazard array of religious people of varying experiences, viewpoints, and goals. They were all in agreement on these things.

They were commissioned to preach the gospel to all men, but one reason they could not do this was that they did not know the languages of all men. The baptism of the Holy Spirit enabled seventeen different language groups to understand men who knew only the Galilaeen language. This coming of the Spirit was on the church indiscriminately, for the manifestations as tongues of fire sat on every one of them, and not just on a favored few. This baptism of the Holy Spirit came just once for all upon the Jerusalem church. Though the power remained, the demonstration of that day was never repeated on this church.

A repetition of Pentecost was visited on a group of Samaritan disciples when Peter and John came as a committee from the Jerusalem church and formed them into a separate church (Acts 8:5-8; Acts 8:12-17). There was an issue here as to whether Samaritans should be received, because Jesus had forbidden the apostles to go to them when He sent them on the limited commission (Matthew 10:5). From Acts 8:17, it is evident that the Samaritans now had the same power of the Spirit that the Jerusalem church had.

There was a repetition of Pentecost in the household of Cornelius, a Gentile, as told in the tenth chapter of Acts. After much coercion from the Lord, Peter went reluctantly to Cornelius' household. As soon as Peter began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word. This is the only instance of unbaptized people receiving this gift of the Spirit (Acts 10:44-48). The explanation is in the fact that the Jewish church members who came with Peter had no intention of giving their consent to baptize these Gentiles. Note the strange way that Peter called for a vote in verse forty-seven. This was God's way of coercing those Jews to give their consent to baptize those whom God had accepted. This group alone received a gift reserved to scriptural churches before they were technically constituted as a church; and, the reason is stated above.

A third repetition of Pentecost occurred at Ephesus when Paul went there (Acts 19:1-7). From this passage, taken with Acts 18:24-46, we are to infer that these disciples had been

baptized by Apollos, who had no authority to perform the baptism of John. It is supposed they were saved and in the same condition that John's disciples were before Jesus came, except that they did not have scriptural baptism; and, of course, they did not know that Jesus had already come and fulfilled His mission. If any wish to regard them as unsaved until Paul preached to them, the writer will take no issue with them. However, the vital point is that when Paul gave them scriptural baptism and laid hands on them, constituting them a scriptural church, then the same gift of the Holy Spirit came on them that came on the Jerusalem church on Pentecost.

The laying on of hands is related to the working of miracles. In the case of Jesus, it signifies the bestowing of the working power of the Holy Spirit, which came on Him immediately after His own baptism (John 1:32, 33). The Spirit is the working agent in the Godhead. In the case of the church members, the laying on of hands denotes the bestowing of the authority that is given into the hands of the church. Let it be carefully noted that this sometimes included miraculous workings in the apostolic days, but miraculous powers were withdrawn at the end of the apostolic age when the completed Bible was given (I Corinthians 13:8-10).

Today, a church receives the benefits of this special office work of the Holy Spirit as soon as it is duly constituted a church, but it does not include the working of miraculous powers. Individuals receive these benefits as soon as they are duly constituted as church members. Church membership is consummated when one comes up out of the water of baptism.

If one wishes to regard it that way, a person now receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the same time he receives scriptural baptism in water. Whatever benefits this baptism has for him remain with him as long as he remains in the faith. If he ceases to continue in the faith, he becomes the kind of castaway Paul mentioned at I Corinthians 9:27. This is the kind of castaway Moses became when the Lord killed him in the wilderness. It is the rejection of a saved person, not from salvation, but from the position and relationship of an accepted worker and witness in the world.

No, individuals as such do not receive a baptism of the Holy Spirit today whereby they do miraculous works. All true churches since the Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus have had the baptism of the Holy Spirit as long as they have been

true churches. But the miraculous element was taken away when the Bible became a full witness of the truth of God.

According to Revelation 16:13, 14, anyone who works miracles today does it by a visitation from an unholy spirit rather than a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Anyone who purports to work miracles now does it either by pure fraud, by hypnotism (the power of mind over matter), or by the power and influence of demon spirits. God certainly works through providence in the field of human instrumentality, but men do not perform miracles by His power today. Otherwise, why do the miracle workers of today not raise the dead, cure the incurably ill, multiply food by thousands and rise into Heaven as Jesus did?

STATUS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST



“John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15). Does this mean it was not necessary for him to be saved as other men are after reaching the age of accountability? Was John the prophet Elijah sent back to the earth?”

Certainly, all will agree that compared with other men John the Baptist was a very peculiar character indeed. He was born of parents too old to have a child normally, and his mother had been barren when she was of an age to bear a child. He was a man sent from God on a very special mission. And, he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb of his mother. In fact, the unborn baby leaped in the womb of his mother when Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoke to his mother Elisabeth (Luke 1:41).

Before we go into the matter of trying to answer the questions stated above, let us say a word about “universal” rules and principles in the Bible. We like to reduce situations to rules that will work inerrantly, but they will not always do this. It is appointed unto men once to die, but Enoch and Elijah never died. Lazarus, along with some others, died, was raised back to life, and then died a second time. In both instances men failed to conform to what we call a universal rule.

A hot fire will soon burn a man to death and his body to a crisp, but the three friends of Daniel withstood a fire that was sevenfold hotter than normal without any harm to them at all. Universal rules are negated to accomplish the purposes of God. These observations are made in preparation for the views to be expressed concerning John the Baptist.

In the first place, John the Baptist had a supernatural birth. Luke 1:7 says Elisabeth was barren and that she and her husband were both well stricken in years. Luke 1:13 says an angel told Zacharias that Elisabeth should bear a son. Luke 1:24

says Elisabeth did conceive, and Luke 1:57 says she brought forth a son. We can only conclude that the case of John the Baptist is unusual because he had a supernatural birth. He does not conform to the “universal” rule in this respect.

In the second place, John was a man who was sent from God (John 1:6). It is true there were other men sent of God on various missions, but the coming of John from God seems to be more intimately associated with his mission than is that of other prophets whom God had sent. John came from God on a particular mission. Other prophets were sent of God on various missions. This is in full harmony with the promise of Malachi 3:1.

In the third place, John the Baptist was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. The writer once heard it argued that babies are born spiritually alive, but that they die spiritually when they come to the age of accountability for sin. I do not believe the Scriptures bear out this view. I believe babies are born devoid of the spirit faculty just as a blind baby is born devoid of the faculty of eyesight. Normally, one must be born of the Spirit before he has any vital connection with the Holy Spirit.

Let no one understand it is being argued that babies and unsaved adults are in a state of spiritual annihilation. If such were the case, then a sinner could not make any response to the convicting of the Holy Spirit, and the work of making the sinner spiritually alive would be one-sided and arbitrary on the part of God. It is much like the case of a young woman who is capable of bearing a child, but she will never have one entirely of herself. It takes the contribution of both the man and the woman to produce a child in the physical sense. It takes a contribution of both the unsaved person and of the Holy Spirit to produce a born-again person.

John the Baptist was not only touched by the Holy Spirit, but he was also mightily moved by the Holy Spirit before he was born; see again Luke 1:41. He was filled with the Spirit from the time of his birth (Luke 1:15). The writer can only conclude that John was different from the general run of babies in that they must be made spiritually alive by the Holy Spirit before they can react as he did both before and after his birth.

The fourth unusual thing about John is that he should go ahead of the coming Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet. His mission was to thoroughly prepare

a people for the reception of Christ when Christ should come on His mission. In his concordance, Robert Young says Elijah was the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced. Elijah prophesied during the reign of Ahab, one of the worst kings that Israel ever had. He defeated the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, he called down a drought of three years and six months on Israel, he prayed down rain at the end of that period, he raised a boy from death, and he was finally taken bodily into Heaven without having experienced death; read I Kings 17 to II Kings 2.

Because Elijah escaped death, many have believed that John the Baptist was literally Elijah returned to earth. Let us try to add these things and come out with the conclusion that is most in harmony with the Scriptures in general.

At Matthew 17:10-13, the disciples asked Jesus about the coming of Elijah before the coming of Christ. He told them Elijah had come already, and they understood he was speaking of John the Baptist. If this were all the Scriptures said on the subject, we would have to accept it at face value, but it is not all the Scriptures say. At John 1:21, John says pointedly he was not Elijah, or Elias as the New Testament puts it.

Some people in a situation like this are inclined to array the words of Jesus against those of John, accepting the words of Jesus and discrediting those of John. We cannot do this without denying the full inspiration of the Bible. We must seek a modification somewhere in a case of this sort.

The modification is found at Matthew 11:14 where Jesus said to a multitude of Jews that if they would receive the message, John was Elijah who was to come. John questioned whether Jesus was the Messiah, and the people questioned whether John was that notable prophet of the Old Testament. This was because not all the things were fulfilled which that prophet said would be done. Jesus said in effect that the reason for this lack was not because John was not the prophet, and it was not because Jesus was not the Messiah, but it was because the Jews had not received either John or Jesus in the right spirit.

It adds up to this, that John was not literally Elijah, but he came to Israel in a time of conditions like those of the time of Elijah, and he fulfilled a ministry like that of Elijah. If Israel would repent and respond properly to the ministry of Elijah, great prosperity would come on that nation. If the Jews would repent and respond properly to the ministry of John, something

near the Millennium would come on them. This is the parallelism between the two cases. And this is the only possible way the writer sees to harmonize the Scriptures on the subject.

Allow the writer to make one final effort to say what he means. John the Baptist was a man sent directly from God on a mission probably more intimate and pressing than that on which any other man was ever sent. He did not inherit a sinful nature and spiritually dead condition as all others — except Jesus. He came as a direct handiwork of God. If these things are true, then he did not have to be saved as other men do.

It is not believed John was literally Elijah, but he had a mission similar to that of Elijah. John was killed at the end of his mission, whereas Elijah had passed over into the glorified “unkillable” state long before John was sent into the world; see II Kings 2:11 and Luke 9:30, 31. Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration is the only man who ever passed over into the glorified state and then returned to the natural state in the flesh so far as the writer has been able to ascertain. And, certainly, Jesus does not conform to the universal pattern of men in many details.

John the Baptist fulfilled the ministry prophesied of Elijah (Matthew 17:12, 13). And, the writer does not believe either Elijah or a prophet like him is to come in the last days. That ministry was fulfilled once for all by John the Baptist.

MEANING AND USAGE OF BAPTISM



“In what way does baptism ‘wash away our sins’ and ‘save us?’ ”

It is fitting that we begin this discussion with a brief statement on how the Bible treats the word “salvation.” The Scriptures set forth a threefold salvation:

First, there is the salvation of the spirit, which is accomplished in the new birth (John 3:3-6; I Peter 1:23). It is a birth and a new creation — not simply a moral reformation. It is instantaneous, complete, and permanent. One does not become unborn spiritually any more than he becomes unborn in the physical sense. Once a born child of God, forever a born child of God.

Second, there is the salvation of the life, which the Bible refers to as “growth in grace” (Romans 12:1, 2). This salvation is a process as opposed to an act. It should begin immediately after the new birth and continue to the end of life in the world. It never reaches its ultimate goal until the resurrection of the body from the dead (I John 3:2). This aspect of salvation is more abundantly discussed than either of the others. Failure to recognize this is why there is so much confusion over such matters as baptismal salvation, falling from grace, salvation by works, etc.

Third, there is the salvation, or redemption, of the body (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:20, 21). Salvation of the body is an act as opposed to a process. It is accomplished instantly in the resurrection of the dead. It makes the saved permanently in a holy, sinless state, releasing us from the limitations which beset us in the present life. Apparently, the unsaved are to be raised in their sinful state, but in indestructible bodies.

We must judge each passage of scripture as to which of these aspects of salvation is meant before we can rightly apply it.

Baptism is far more easily understood if we first understand its usage in Old Testament types. Hence, we shall first note the flood as a type of baptism (I Peter 3:18-21). The account of the flood is given in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Genesis. It should be abundantly evident that the flood saved Noah from the evil influences of the evil generation who lived about him. Then I Peter 3:21 says in part: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . . ." In this passage Baptists have sought to make the Old Testament situation the literal fact and the New Testament situation the figure (or the type). Generally, however, we teach that the Old Testament gives the types and the New Testament gives the literal realities. What the flood did for Noah is a type of what baptism does for us. The flood put Noah where he would not be enticed by ungodly men to cease to walk with God (Genesis 6:9). Baptism, when received with a proper commitment, places a saved person in the church, where he will be drawn away by every wind of false doctrine (I Corinthians 10:1-4). As a type of New Testament baptism, the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) physically saved Israel from the Egyptian bondage after they had been spiritually saved under the blood of the Passover lamb on the night they departed from Egypt (Exodus 12). Though they had been typically saved in Egypt the evening of the Passover, they would have gone right back to the Egyptian bondage the next morning if they had remained there. Instead, they took a three-stage journey away from Egypt to the Red Sea. Three days is typically the space of the full journey from life into death (Matthew 12:40). The baptism that put the sea between Israel and the bondage in Egypt also killed the ones who would take them back into slavery; see Hebrews 2:14, 15. I Corinthians 10:2 says they were also baptized unto Moses. Moses was going by faith under the instruction of God and the leadership of the cloud (the Holy Spirit) on a journey which none of them could make alone to a better world. In their crossing of the sea, the people firmly committed themselves to go on the journey by faith. Their firm commitment in being "baptized in the cloud and in the sea" is why God killed them in the wilderness when they turned aside from the journey. They did not lose their salvation, but they lost the joy of it and the opportunities of blessings from it in life.

The baptism of Jesus should teach us much about the purpose of baptism (Matthew 3:13-17). First, it was the initiatory

act of the public ministry of Jesus. He had no sins to be washed away in baptism (I Peter 2:22). But he said, according to the Greek text, that it is proper, or fitting, for us to fulfill all righteousness, verse 15. In His baptism Jesus formally committed Himself in the sight of the intelligence of the universe to do the will of the Father in all things. The proof of this statement lies in the immediate results of His baptism.

The first response was that the Holy Spirit came down in a form that looked like a dove, and the Spirit abode on him (John 1:32).

The second response was that the voice of God said from Heaven: “. . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” If baptism is not very important, why this mighty demonstration at this particular time?

The third response was that Jesus was led of the Spirit (Mark 1:12 says driven of the Spirit) into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. Again we may ask why at this particular time? The answer is that Jesus had committed Himself in the sight of the Devil, as the Son of man, to do the will of God in all things. The Devil cast upon Him the three basic temptations of mankind (I John 2:16). These are the same as those under which Eve and Adam fell (Genesis 3:6). This is one more item of evidence that God is perfectly fair in His dealings — even with Satan. So, baptism is equivalent to a terribly solemn vow to do the will of God in all things which God may lead and enable us to do.

How baptism washes away sins:

At Acts 22:16, Ananias says to Saul that he should arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. As to this latter phrase, baptism is not worth anything unless a solemn commitment accompanies it. Surely no Baptist will deny that Paul was saved when he confessed the Lord at Acts 9:6. But a very strange detail enters in just here. Instead of his spiritual birth giving him the clearest vision he had ever had, a view of the Lord turned him stone blind. He had been a Pharisee, and seeing Christ utterly different from how he had conceived Him and put him in the condition of not knowing anything doctrinally. This is what his blindness signifies. Ananias' telling him religious truth, and his commitment to be baptized is what caused his sight to return. Paul's renouncement of Pharisaism and murdering Christians

was solemnly depicted in his baptism. In this sense alone did baptism wash away his sins.

Let us note several controversial passages on baptism:

Mark 1:4 speaks of a baptism of repentance “for” (literally “unto”) the taking away of sins. If it is right for a saved person to commit himself to a scriptural church, then it is wrong for him not to do so. Therefore, the sin of his religious position is taken away when his religious commitment is consummated in baptism.

At Acts 2:38, Peter simply told an assembly of religious Jews what they should do to receive the Holy Spirit in the sense which it came on the Jewish church on Pentecost. This office work had been promised at John 14:16-18, 26 and elsewhere.

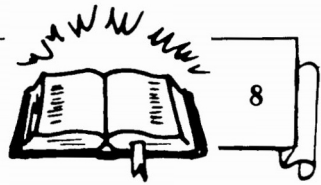
At I Corinthians 15:29, Paul argues it would be utterly senseless to picture death and resurrection in baptism if there were no resurrection of the dead.

Consider Romans 6:4. Christ died; then he rose in a condition wherein death could not touch him again. In baptism we renounce an old manner of life which ends in death, and we embrace a new manner of life wherein there is no death. This is not a hint a sinless perfection, but it is an assertion that all the scriptural works that we do for Christ will live forever.

Mark 1:8 simply states that the same people who were baptized in water should be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This baptism in the Holy Spirit was a church gift and it had nothing to do with the new birth, except that the new birth necessarily preceded it.

Galatians 3:26, 27 says we are in the position of mature sons of God when we come into the church. We officially clothe ourselves with Christ when we come into the church through baptism.

**ONE LORD, ONE FAITH,
ONE BAPTISM**



“What did Paul mean by the statement: ‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism?’ Is this baptism of water, or of the Holy Spirit?”

The book of Ephesians is addressed to the saints at Ephesus and to the faithful ones in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1). A New Testament saint is a saved person who has been scripturally baptized, and who is fully committed to walk according to the New Testament rule in his life. This makes a saint a faithful church member. I believe that nothing less than this can qualify one as a New Testament saint.

Ephesians is addressed to the church from the institutional standpoint. Most of the New Testament epistles deal with the church from the angle of specific congregations such as Corinthian, Galatian, and Philippian churches, with a secondary application to any and all other churches. Ephesians applies to all churches alike, even though it is addressed to one specific congregation.

The reference to the “one baptism” is among a list of seven unities that are to be kept by all churches. The simple answer to the question above is that the only baptism the church can administer is baptism in water. However, the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanies, or its results follow, the water baptism which the church administers. Let us hasten to add that today miraculous powers do not follow the receiving of the Holy Spirit in this office work as was the case on Pentecost, and on several occasions following Pentecost.

Let us turn first to the great Old Testament type of baptism. I Corinthians 10:1-4 tells that all Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the Red Sea. The historical record of this baptism is given in Exodus, chapter 14. The sequence of events is in this order:

(1) Israel was typically saved under the blood of the Passover lamb on the night of their departure from Egypt (Exodus 12). The blood of the lamb kept them from death in judgment, and they traveled in the strength which they derived from its flesh.

(2) Israel traveled a journey of three stages away from Egypt toward the land of promise. This typifies the fact that Jesus took a journey of three days and three nights into the region of death in his purchasing of our salvation (Matthew 12:40). It also depicts that we should commit ourselves to go all the way in our renouncing of the world and in our following of Christ.

(3) Only after having come this far away from Egypt was Israel ready to be typically baptized in the cloud and in the sea (I Corinthians 10:2). The cloud represents the Holy Spirit guiding Israel as they went from the point of their salvation to the point of their final commitment to make the journey by faith to the land of promise.

(4) The Red Sea represents the water of baptism. Israel was typically baptized in water and in the Spirit at the same time. It has been indicated previously that the results of the baptism of the Holy Spirit inevitably follow the right baptism in water. Moses and the pillar of cloud crossed the sea, and those who followed them, being baptized in the cloud and in the sea, had to continue to follow Moses and the cloud or they would have perished in the wilderness (I Corinthians 10:5).

(5) There was no returning to Egypt for two reasons. First, the sea stood as a barrier between them and Egypt; and second, Pharaoh, who would have taken them back to Egypt, was dead. In their being baptized unto Moses, they had made a terribly solemn, final commitment to go where he would lead them, a progressive journey toward the land of promise. When they turned aside from this purpose, it happened to them according to Hebrews 10:26, 27. They died in the wilderness without ever attaining the blessings God held out to them in the present life. The immediate goal of Israel was things they might attain in the present life. Heaven was in the distant future, but Israel wanted rest from their burdens and wanderings in the present world. Those, including Moses, who died in the wilderness did not lose their salvation, but they did lose a measure of heavenly satisfaction which is held out to those who commit themselves to walk with God in life.

Having noted some details of baptism's type, let us now turn to the benefits of baptism itself. Consider some things which Jesus did and did not do when he came into the world. Note the negatives first:

(1) Jesus did not institute a new plan of salvation. It is salvation by grace as it has been all the way back to Adam.

(2) He did not deny and discredit the law. He fulfilled it.

(3) He did not discredit nor deny any Old Testament saints. Hebrews, chapter 11, has a long list of Old Testament saved people and the things they accomplished by faith.

Some things that Jesus did do were:

(1) He taught and emphasized salvation by grace. No new plan of salvation was instituted when Jesus changed the dispensations.

(2) He made love, as opposed to fear, the motivating force in the lives of His disciples (Romans 8:15).

(3) He established a mode of life among His disciples whereby they could walk and live acceptably before Him and continue to the end of the present world. This manner of life is made possible by a special ministry of the Holy Spirit to the church (John 16:13, 14). It does not produce sinless perfection in the flesh of church members, but it does enable them to hold onto the fundamentals of Bible doctrines and practices. This is what Jesus demands of us, and it is in this regard He promised that the gates of Hell should not prevail against the church until the end of the age (Matthew 16:18).

Sum up the whole matter:

(1) Israel was typically baptized in the water and the Spirit — the sea and the cloud — at the same time (I Corinthians 10:2).

(2) The early disciples were baptized in water (Mark 1:5) and they were promised they would receive the Spirit baptism later (Mark 1:8). They received this Spirit baptism on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). It produced miraculous results because the whole

company, including the disciples, needed to be convinced of the reality of the fulfillment of the promise. This demonstration did not come on this congregation any more, but the Spirit abode on them as a church thereafter.

(3) New churches at Samaria, in Cornelius' household, and at Ephesus received repetitions of Pentecost under their peculiar situations — just one time each. This ended this kind of demonstrations in churches. Miraculous healings, tongues, etc. continued for a time, but they also were soon taken away.

(4) From the above points onward, each new church received this special ministry of the Holy Spirit as it was duly constituted into a church. It is promised the Spirit will continue in this office to the end of the age (John 14:16). It is not accompanied by any outward demonstration, either as churches or as individuals.

(5) The church had a number of special gifts during the apostolic age; see I Corinthians, chapter thirteen. These were to enable it to carry out the mission which was given to the church. But, all special gifts were taken away when the Bible was completed, with the exception of faith, hope, and love (I Corinthians 13:13). These abide as the permanent gifts to the church.

The answer to the question at the beginning of this discussion will be stated as briefly and plainly as possible. The only baptism which the church has ever been commissioned to perform is water baptism. It puts the person into the church, where the special ministry of the Holy Spirit is. As soon as the person is in the church, he has as much benefit of the Spirit in this office as anyone else. It comes to him automatically as the result of church membership.

The so-called miraculous power of the Holy Spirit which some claim to have now is either of the Devil (Revelation 16:13, 14), or it is pure fraud, or it is simply the power of hypnotism.

REBAPTISM OF EPHESIAN DISCIPLES



9

“Please explain the reason why the disciples in Ephesus had to be rebaptized by Paul (Acts 19:1-7).”

There are many situations in the Bible for which we are unable to find a “thus saith the Lord” in explanation of them. The rebaptizing of the Ephesian disciples is one such situation. However, there is an explanation which is in complete harmony with sound logic and with Scripture teachings in general.

In this series of articles, both water baptism and Spirit baptism have been discussed in detail as to their meaning and application. While some have denied that water baptism is “the door to the church,” it yet remains that an eligible candidate goes down into the water a non-church member and comes up out of the water a church member. A translation of Galatians 3:26, 27 is given from the Greek text: “For ye are all the (mature) sons of God through the faith in Christ Jesus; for whosoever of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” This simply means that we clothe ourselves in the doctrines and practices of Christ when we commit ourselves to the church through baptism.

Spirit baptism is a gift that came on the church (Acts 2:1-8). The Spirit came to take the place of Jesus as leader and enlightener of the church as was promised to the disciples at John 14:16-18, 26.

When Paul came to deal with the disciples whom he found at Ephesus, somehow he detected there was something lacking in them which he had been accustomed to finding in other groups of disciples. Let it be stated that only saved, baptized, and committed people will qualify as disciples as the term is used in the New Testament. Before we look at their case in detail, let us note some background material.

Acts 18:24, 25, seemingly rather abruptly, introduces Apollos into the narrative. He was a sojourning Jew, who had been born in Alexandria, in Northern Africa. As such he would be somewhat isolated from the Bible land and Bible events. He was “eloquent”, meaning highly intelligent, and he was instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures as they pertain to the coming of Christ. But he did not know that Christ had already come. This is indicated by the fact that he “knew only the baptism of John.”

It appears to be a perfectly logical, biblical conclusion that Apollos had come into contact with John the Baptist and his ministry. He already knew what the Old Testament Scriptures said about the coming and ministry of the Messiah (the anointed one). He was evidently convinced by John that this coming was imminent — that is, to be expected immediately. On his own initiative and great zeal he had taken the ministry of John unto himself. Probably he had spent the intervening years in Africa, and thus did not know the Messiah had already come and fulfilled His mission in the world.

Aquila and Priscilla, who had been taught by Paul (Acts 18:2, 3), heard Apollos preach at Ephesus (Acts 18:26). It was easy for them to see there was a great deal lacking in the message which he preached, so they took him and explained the many later developments to him.

The question logically comes up as to why Apollos did not immediately set right the group of disciples at Ephesus. The answer is that he was not an ordained minister, and he had not been commissioned by anyone to baptize and organize churches. The Scriptures do not tell us why this matter was not taken care of immediately, and they do not tell us whether Apollos was ever ordained as a full-fledged minister, though I Corinthians 3:6 might imply it. What the record does seem to indicate is that Apollos left Ephesus and went to the Grecian region (Acts 18:27) immediately after Aquila and Priscilla told him the whole truth of the New Testament gospel. Thus, he left the group of disciples at Ephesus in the same condition in which the disciples of John were before the coming of Jesus, except that the Ephesian disciples did not have scriptural baptism. They had been dipped, but they had not been authoritatively baptized. It is a case of people doing all they knew to do, but they did not know the whole truth about the church.

Now let us try to sum up the case of Paul and the Ephesian disciples. Paul came to Ephesus and found certain disciples there. He asked them if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed. This indicates they did not fit the usual pattern of New Testament churches. Their answer was that they had not heard whether there was a Holy Spirit. This seems to mean they had not heard anything about the Holy Spirit in relation to the new manner of life which they had embraced.

Paul explained to them that the baptism of John signified repentance, and it also signified a willingness to receive the one who should come after John, the Messiah, or Christ. Whether these disciples had ever heard of Jesus of Nazareth is immaterial. The vital point is they had not heard of him as the one whom John had come to introduce. Here is where Apollos had departed from the ministry of John. Jesus had been revealed to John, but evidently he had not been so presented to Apollos. Apollos preached about an unidentified person who was yet to come.

It is necessarily implied that Paul told these disciples the whole gospel story, for it is said that when they heard what he had to say, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 2:36 implies that Jesus did not truly take to Himself the position of Lord until He had died, risen from death, and ascended into Heaven. Acts 2:33 says that when Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God, He claimed the promise of the Father and poured out the Spirit on the church on Pentecost.

These disciples accepted the full gospel message, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, Paul laid hands on them, and they received the Spirit in essentially the same way that the Jerusalem church received it on Pentecost. The laying on of hands by Paul signified his acting on the authority of his home church conferred on him as a church missionary.

The Ephesian disciples simply had not been scripturally baptized until Paul, an authorized missionary, baptized them (Acts 13:2, 3).

WINE OR GRAPE JUICE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER



10

“Do the Scriptures demand the use of fermented wine exclusively in the Lord’s Supper, or is the unfermented fruit of the vine acceptable? Would it be wrong to use fermented wine?”

The questions have to do with the drink to be used in the observance of the Lord’s Supper. However, some other items should be mentioned in connection with the discussion of this subject.

(1) The Lord’s Supper is a memorial to commemorate the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. It should never be observed without due meditation on these great and awful facts by all who participate — the meaning which the dying of Jesus has for us.

(2) Forty years ago, many of our preachers and churches believed and practiced the idea that the supper is a kingdom ordinance rather than a church ordinance. This idea was based on such scriptures as Luke 22:28-30. All brethren of like faith and order were invited to partake with a local church when it observed the supper. This scripture apparently refers to the Millennium. I have always believed the Lord’s Supper should extend just as far as the power of church discipline extends, which is to the membership of a local congregation.

(3) Unleavened bread should be used for the following reasons: Jesus evidently used the unleavened bread of the Passover feast when He instituted the supper (Matthew 26:26). Leaven in the Bible is a type of sin and it should not be present where the broken body of Jesus is depicted.

(4) The Bible does not say how often the Lord’s Supper should be observed. If observed very frequently, it will become

a mere formality. If seldom or never observed, the people lose sight of its meaning.

(5) The pastor should officiate at the observance of the supper (Matthew 26:26, 27). Deacons should serve the elements of the supper if possible (Acts 6:2-6).

Now let us get back to the matter of whether we should use wine or grape juice in the Lord's Supper. Some churches seem to be unalterably at variance on this subject. Possibly half of them utterly refuse wine on account of the prohibition issue. Possibly the other half believe only wine can fulfill the Scripture specifications on the subject. Brother J. R. Graves, a preacher of the last century, wrote a rather lengthy tract to the end that only wine can qualify as the ultimate fruit of the vine.

It is striking that, though the liquid of the supper is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament, it is referred to only as "the cup" and "the fruit of the vine." Note Matthew 26:27, 29; I Corinthians 11:24-26. For this reason, I believe either wine or grape juice is acceptable. Let me hasten to add though, that I believe wine or vinegar is the only ultimate fruit of the vine as the matter is treated in the New Testament. But let us seek to come to our conclusions on the basis of Bible facts rather than our personal prejudices.

The Bible uses the word "wine" about one hundred sixty-five times. In approximately half of these usages, it seems to me, wine means a liquid that has alcoholic content. One may dispute the percentage which I suggest, but he cannot deny that wine often has the power of intoxication (Ephesians 5:18).

In the other approximately half of the instances where "wine" occurs, there seems to be no intimation as to whether it has alcoholic content, except that fresh grape juice is sometimes called wine. An instance of this is Matthew 9:17, where grape juice is called wine by anticipation. I believe this is always the case where grape juice is called wine. It does not have an alcoholic content when it is first pressed from the grapes, but the way it was kept in the wineskins in a warm climate would inevitably ferment it just as it is pictured at Matthew 9:17. I do not think the fruit of the vine remained as grape juice for very long. The Lord's Supper was instituted about April. I do not think there were any ripe grapes until about July. So where would the grape juice come from?

There will always be some “wiseacre” to tell us they preserved it by sealing it in glass. The Bible gives us no hint they had the knowledge or facilities to do this. Ordinary people did not attempt to preserve food in jars when I was a child — much less two thousand years ago.

The grape juice was pressed out and was placed in the wineskins. It soon fermented and became strong wine, weak wine, or vinegar, depending on the sugar content that was present. There is much evidence that generally wine was low in alcoholic content. Peter appears to argue that the disciples were not drunk on Pentecost because it was too early in the day for them to have drunk enough wine to intoxicate them (Acts 2:15).

I actually heard a Baptist preacher argue that there was no alcohol in the wine which Jesus created at Cana (John 2:10) because there was not sufficient time for it to ferment. Not many people will fall for that kind of asininity today. The argument of the governor of the feast was that when the guests were so drunk they did not have sense enough to know the difference, usually the host would give them poor wine. The only peculiarity about the wine Jesus made was it was the best of all. It had alcoholic content just as any real wine has alcoholic content.

Both the Old and the New Testaments make clear distinction between wine and strong drink. One example is Leviticus 10:9, where the priests were not to drink wine or strong drink before they went into the tabernacle to serve there. The logical reason is that both were intoxicants. At Luke 1:15 it is specified that John the Baptist was not to drink wine or strong drink. He was to be a special instrument for God and he should not drink intoxicants for the same reasons the Old Testament priests should not drink them.

It appears that wine was always made from grapes, but strong drink might be made from various grains and fruits. It appears also that the alcoholic content in strong drink was much higher than that in wine.

Generally, wine seems to have been very low in alcoholic content. It was commonly drunk by the people as a beverage. Both Noah and Lot came to grief and shame for overindulgence in wine. At I Corinthians 11:21, church members apparently were getting drunk from the wine meant for the Lord's Supper.

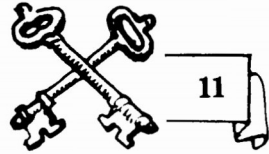
They are condemned for drunkenness, but not for the wine in the supper.

If I had my preference in the Lord's Supper, I would send a deacon to a drug store to get a wine of very low alcoholic content to use. I would not send one to a saloon to buy wine so high in alcohol that it would "knock a mule down." In following this course, I would believe I was coming as near to what Jesus used as I possibly could.

In practice, I have always stated my views to the church and then I have left them to do what they think is right. On this particular subject that is likely what they will do anyway. Perhaps in half of the instances they have used wine, and in the other half have used grape juice. In either case, it can be reckoned as "the cup" and "the fruit of the vine."

On some things you just cannot get Baptists to agree.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



“In what sense were the keys of the kingdom given to Peter (Matthew 16:19)? Was it the giving of authority to establish the Samaritan and the Gentile churches? Do the true churches have these keys? How much authority do the keys give to the church?”

One of the very complicated and much discussed subjects of the Bible is the question of just what the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of Heaven) is. The view is taken here that there is no distinction to be made between the two. “The kingdom of Heaven” is an expression peculiar to Matthew. The other gospels call the same body “the kingdom of God.” Scofield destroys his own evidence of a distinction between the two.

The kingdom is ultimately righteous men under Christ ruling the world in righteousness. This is to say it is the Millennial reign. But there are various steps or stages in the development of the kingdom before we come to the Millennium. This is where we must do some careful discerning to rightly arrive at the truth. The matter of multiplying kingdoms in the Bible does much to confuse the real issues, but it does nothing to clarify these issues. There has never been but one so far as the kingdom of God is concerned.

Let us note some steps in the development of the kingdom idea:

(1) At Genesis 12:2, Abram is told that the Lord will make of him a great nation. At Genesis 17:6, Abraham is told that kings would come out of him. At II Samuel 7:16 David is told that his house and his kingdom is to be established forever. All of these promises are unconditional, but the time and circumstances of their fulfillment are conditional. This fact gives leeway for the steps enumerated in the following matter.

(2) To Israel coming out of Egypt, the kingdom would have been a good land flowing with milk and honey if they had walked with the Lord in obedience and faith (Exodus 3:7, 8; Joshua 1:2-5). It seems to me the failures of the people kept the kingdom from being established at this time.

(3) To the Jews in Jesus' day, the kingdom would have meant personal salvation and the inner circle in the church (Matthew 10:5, 6). Here Jesus was not telling the apostles to abandon the Samaritans and the Gentiles to Hell; but, He was telling them to devote their energies to rallying the Jews to the church and kingdom cause at that particular and crucial time. From the beginning Jesus intended for the Samaritans and the Gentiles to have salvation and a position in the church, but it was to be after the Jews had made their decision as to Jesus and the church.

(4) Thus, to the Gentiles the kingdom message would have brought a more abundant salvation (Mark 7:24-30), and it would have brought them into the church, where there is equality. But the church would still have been built around a nucleus of Israelites. In a way, it would have been much as it will be in the Millennium, with Israel serving as a great force for the evangelization of the world (Zechariah 8:22, 23). Here, however, we are on the verge of going beyond what is written, so let us stop.

(5) To all who will meet the terms of the gospel today (the so-called Gentile church period) the kingdom message means salvation, and the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of that salvation (Romans 14:17). See also I John 5:13, which teaches that there is to be a knowledge of salvation to those who walk according to the New Testament rule in the church relationship.

(6) To Israel in the Millennium, the kingdom of God will be the inheritance of a good land (Isaiah 11:6-9). To them it will mean universal salvation at that time (Romans 11:26). Multitudes of other nations will also be saved and worship the Lord in truth (Zechariah 8:23).

(7) To the glorified church in the Millennium, the kingdom of God will mean their ruling with Christ during the thousand years (Matthew 19:28).

Now let us turn our attention to the subject of the circumstances of the giving of the keys of the kingdom of God. The story is aptly summed up in the statement from John 1:11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Those who received him not were the Jews.

(1) After Jesus began His public ministry, He went to the first Passover, which was held in Jerusalem. There He found that the Jewish religious authorities had turned the house of God into a den of thieves (John 2:13-18). He drove out those who were defiling the temple, hoping the Jews would see that He was the Messiah who was to come. Instead, they challenged His right to do what He had done. He went back to Galilee with a burdened heart because of the rebuff He had received from His brethren. He remained there and ministered to the common people for another year.

(2) He went back to Jerusalem to the Passover the next year. There He found the paralyzed man lying at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16). *Bethesda* means in the Hebrew tongue "House of Mercy." The man, utterly helpless, aptly pictured the spiritual, political, and economic condition of the Jewish people at the time, as they were in religious apostasy, and were in bondage to the Roman Empire. Jesus healed the hopelessly afflicted man to show the Jews He would heal them as individuals and as a nation if they would accept Him. They accused Him of breaking the law of Moses in that He healed the man on the Sabbath day. They did not understand that the Sabbath was meant to point them to the time when they would have rest in the Messiah from all their ills as a nation and as individuals. He went back to Galilee and ministered to the common people for another year. But there was a difference this time. He began to talk less and less about the kingdom of the Jews and He talked more and more about the church and the church age.

(3) According to the harmony of the gospels, Jesus ordained the twelve apostles during this year (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:12-17). And, apparently, immediately afterwards, He preached the Sermon on the Mount, which is the great initiatory sermon to the church. He did many works of healing during this year, and He taught the masses of the people constantly.

(4) Some authorities believe Jesus did not go to the Passover the third year of His ministry. They believe at the time the feast was being celebrated in Jerusalem, Jesus was away to the north on the border of the Gentile world preaching the sermon on the bread of life. As soon as the feast was over, the religious leaders from Jerusalem came seeking Jesus (Mark 7:1-6). During this time, Jesus healed the Gentile daughter of the Syrophenician woman. He began to talk about the church and the Gentile church age (Matthew 16:13-28). It was at this time that He gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter (Matthew 16:19).

Now let us talk briefly about the giving of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven:

(1) The keys of the kingdom were given to Peter (Matthew 16:19) merely as a spokesman, an apostle, and a representative member of the church. Notice that Jesus addressed the whole group of disciples (Matthew 16:13). It was only because Peter was quicker to answer than the others that Jesus then addressed him individually. I, for one, am not strong on “apostolic authority” except such as inheres in an ordained preacher of today.

(2) The keys of the kingdom were really given to the church as such (Matthew 18:17-19; John 20:22, 23; Acts 1:8).

The keys of the kingdom of Heaven are given into the hands of the real churches of Jesus. They give power and authority to bind and loose in the church relationship. What the church binds and looses becomes effective only as they act within the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures. At Matthew 18:17, 18, the binding and loosing that are done in Heaven are expressed in the future perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that the Lord does His binding and loosing before the church gets its binding and loosing done. This suggests to us that the Lord’s church roll might be pretty widely variant from ours sometimes.

The binding by the church involves exactly what is involved in the great commission given at Matthew 28:19, 20. The loosing by the church is the same as that at Matthew 18:17, 18.

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
IN CHURCH SERVICES**



12

“Are musical instruments in church services scriptural? Distinguish among psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16.”

It is true that we in the church age today are not under the law rule that prevailed in Israel in Old Testament times; but, it is true also that what was morally right in Old Testament times is right today, and what was morally wrong then is equally wrong today. Therefore, it is perfectly fitting that we look first of all to the attitude of the Old Testament saints concerning musical instruments in their religious assemblies.

Some will raise the objection that the ceremonial rites of the law were done away without the people losing any moral or spiritual values. But every ceremonial thing of the law was meant to picture some spiritual or moral principles in type. When the realities to which the types referred came in Christ, the types ceased to be carried out because they were no longer needed to picture the realities. This is an entirely different matter from the using of musical instruments in worship services. Music has exactly the same pertinence it has always had in worship services.

Music and musical instruments begin to be mentioned in the Bible as soon as the story of civilizations begins to be told. At Genesis 4:21 we are told that Jubal was the father of all who performed on the harp and the organ. He was the son of Lamech and Adah, and his name means some such thing as jubilant (Jubal-ant) shouting or playing on an instrument. This was in the eighth generation from Adam. Thus music has been with mankind a long time.

At I Samuel 16:23 we have the account of David playing on a harp before King Saul to drive away an evil spirit from Jehovah that terrified him. This spirit was evil only in the

sense that it did terrify Saul. The story is that soon after Saul became king of Israel, he willfully disobeyed the Lord in an important matter, and the Lord rejected him as king over Israel. He remained as king for many years, but he walked alone. There was no further help from the Lord for him. He was advised by his servants to send for David, who was a skillful player on the harp, to cheer him in his periods of terrible depression. The playing of David did have this effect and Saul was cheerful again. If music can cheer a man who has willfully disobeyed God, and whom God has cast off so far as his life is concerned, then music in church can certainly lift the lagging spirits of us who have not departed from the Lord as far as Saul had done.

The one hundred fiftieth Psalm admonishes Israel to praise Jehovah, and to praise God, with the sound of about ten kinds of musical instruments. Many times the various psalms mention musical instruments as being regularly used by Israel in their worship assemblies. There is not a valid reason under heaven why musical instruments would be morally right in the temple worship in Israel and then be morally wrong in the church assemblies of today.

The sixty-eighth Psalm looks backward to when God had given great victories to Israel in the past, but it chiefly looks forward to when God will deliver and regather Israel from the nations where they have been scattered and sorely oppressed these many generations. As Israel goes up to Jerusalem to worship again, the singers go before, followed by the players on musical instruments (Psalm 68:25). If instrumental music was so good in ancient Israel, and if it is to be so prominent in regathered and saved Israel in the Millennium, what is so terribly wrong with it in church services now?

At Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, music in church services is expressed by three terms, each of which has its specific meanings and usages. Let us advance from the less important one of these to the most important one as pertains to the subject in hand.

Both of the passages noted above mention hymns. The Greek word from which "hymn" comes is *humnos*. It seems to be what is called a mimetic word, meaning that it imitates a sound — the sound of humming. This word is used only a few times in the New Testament. It seems to refer to the rhythm, tune, or melody of the song. The rhythm of the song appeals either to

the heart or to the feet of the hearer. Hence, he is moved either to rejoice in spirit or to dance when he hears the song. We should be careful of what the appeal of the song is before we use it for worship in church. In this part of the song we are able to express those spiritual emotions which cannot be put into words.

The Hebrew word to which *humnos* corresponds best is also a word that seems to imitate a sound. It is something like zoom, buzz, or hum. Likewise it expresses the rhythm in the song. It is *zamar* in Hebrew, and it is very abundantly used in the Psalms.

We are also told to speak to ourselves (or rather to speak among ourselves) in spiritual songs. This is the aspect of the song which actually carries the message in words. The English word “ode” is taken bodily from the Greek word used here. An *ode* is a poem which carries a connected and related message to the reader. In this respect, this facet of the song is almost identical with the prose writings of the Bible. It tells great Bible truths just as the prose writings do.

The Greek word here seems to be most closely related to the Hebrew word *shir*. It is mostly rendered “song,” or “to sing,” and it is used where the actual good qualities of God are enumerated. It is given in the Hebrew Bible as the title to the Song of Solomon.

The final point is that a “psalm” is rightly a song sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Certainly musical instruments were abundantly used in the temple worship of Israel. The Jewish historian, Josephus, who lived about the time of Christ, makes this point very emphatically in his history of the Jews. Again we introduce the question: If musical instruments in worship were so right then, why should anyone deem them to be so wrong now? There is nothing to this claim but a silly quibble.

The English word “psalm” comes from Greek. There is the noun *psalmos* — “a psalm”; there is the verb *psallo* — “I touch,” or “I explore with the hands”; and there is a related verb *pselaphao* — “I carefully examine with the hands.” This latter is used by Jesus when He invited the disciples to handle Him to see that He really was Jesus after the resurrection (Luke 24:39). There can be no mistake about it. As the New Testament uses the term *psalmos*, “a psalm,” it means a song sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

If we reject the idea of the musical instrument, we simply destroy the real import of the word *psalmos*. There can be no psalm in the literal sense without the action of the hands in playing on stringed or keyed instruments.

There is a Hebrew word, *mizmor*, used about one hundred times in the Psalms. It is a mimetic word which imitates the sound of vibrating strings of a musical instrument. It is commonly translated *psalmos* in the Greek version of the Old Testament. This Greek version of the Old Testament was made by seventy Jewish scholars shortly before the coming of Christ into the world. Regardless of what we might think of the fundamental beliefs of these Jews on religious matters, we certainly should admit that they knew far more about both the Hebrew and the Greek languages of that time than any of us know today.

They knew *mizmor* denoted a song sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments and they translated it into Greek as *psalmos*, clearly indicating they also knew *psalmos* denotes a song sung with the accompaniment of musical instruments. *Psalmos* is the first Greek word used at both Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, where we are instructed to sing with the accompaniment of musical instruments in church.

There are spiritual emotions which cannot be expressed in words (II Corinthians 12:4). These should be expressed in the rhythm of both singing and the playing of musical instruments.

CONDITION AND NEED OF CHURCHES



13

“What do you think is the greatest need of churches and Christians today?”

The greatest need which churches have today is a return to the commitment that the apostolic church had shortly after Pentecost.

The greatest thing that is wrong with churches and individual church members is stated at II Timothy 3:5, “. . . Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof . . .”

Both of the above matters will be discussed more fully later. But let us take note of some universal working principles first. God has started mankind out under favorable conditions time and again, and under every plan tried man has miserably failed. The dispensations have ended with the severe judgments of God upon the ungodly devices of man. Let us note the following to refresh our memory:

God made man in the image and likeness of God. He placed him in a good environment and carefully instructed him as to what was good and bad for him. Man, the lord of the creation, ended up a sinner, a slave to a cursed creation with the sentence of death upon him.

God called fallen man to salvation and then to scriptural service. Abel came and Cain did not. There was a godly race and an ungodly race until Seth began to intermix with Cain. Then there was only an ungodly race except for Noah (Genesis 6:9). The judgment of the flood destroyed all except Noah and his family. There would not have been any of the godly generation left when Noah should die, so God gave the spiritual heritage to Shem (Genesis 9:26, 27). But he found the sons of Shem worshiping idols in the days of Abraham (Joshua 24:2, 14). He called Abraham out of Ur (Genesis 12:1) and he abandoned the other Shemites to judgment.

God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham which involved the nation of Israel. They finally went into Babylonian captivities — judgment that came because they departed from the commandments of God. The majority of them then went into the worldwide, age-long dispersion.

Christ came to the remnant of Israel, the Jews, who were in bitter servitude to Rome at the time. They rejected and crucified him, and they called the curse of his blood down upon themselves and their children. They soon went into the world wide dispersion with the curse of spiritual blindness resting upon them which remains until this day. Thus, they bear out the principle that man finally brings himself to judgment.

Jesus established the church, a thing the angels desired to look into (I Peter 1:12). He promised its continued existence to the end of the present age (Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:20). But, there are repeated warnings that many would depart from the faith, especially as the church age comes to its close.

In His infinite wisdom, Jesus devised the church plan whereby man could walk uprightly, acceptably, and constantly before God. As previously stated, He promised its continued existence until the end of the age. But the Devil has always successfully opposed the works of God by imitation. Satan soon began an imitation, opposing “church” in Rome. This group soon gained the ascendancy in the so-called “Christian” world, and it has kept it until today. It is the most influential group in the professing Christian realm. Its influence has caused many true churches to depart from the faith by their imitating its false doctrines and practices. Thus, while a remnant have remained true to the word of God, many more have departed from the faith, making a mockery of religious doctrine and practice.

The Protestant Reformation has caused hundreds of new groups calling themselves churches to enter the field of professing Christianity. They teach everything humanly conceivable in the way of Christian doctrine and practice. This situation has confused doctrines and practices to the extent that very few know what the truth is anymore. It is exactly the way the Devil planned for it to be. This present condition of affairs sets the stage perfectly for what the New Testament says about conditions in the last days. Let us mention a few passages.

II Timothy 3:1-5 brings about twenty charges against religious people of the last days which sum up the fact that they are taking selfish pride in their own attainments. They are about as far removed from the example and rules given by Jesus as they could possibly be. Paul says they have a form of godliness, but deny the power of godliness. It is not believed that we can improve upon this description of what religious service is like today in general — including much of that in true churches.

The abounding of false christs and false prophets is given by Jesus as signs of the end of the age (Matthew 24:5, 11, 15, 24). These are any and all who advocate things in religion that the Scriptures do not teach.

Matthew 24:12, 38 tells about an abounding of iniquity, which is really lawlessness, such as it was in the days of Noah. Verse 10 of this same chapter tells how many church people will be offended at the application of Scripture rule and will betray and hate one another. If one preacher will not go with a church in a career of worldliness, there will be three waiting to get his job and go along with their worldly ways.

At Revelation 3:14-22, the Laodicean church (the church in the last days) is composed of indifferent outward conformists ready to justify themselves in anything they may wish to do. They have much money and human talent, but they neither know nor care about their spiritual poverty. The Holy Spirit guides the committed, obedient church into the way of all truth (John 16:13), but it does not so guide an utterly worldly formalistic church.

In the parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), all the virgins (that is, churches), once had the light producing oil (the Holy Spirit), but as time went on, the Spirit departed from five of them (verse 8). Five of them ceased to be true churches; but, tragic to say, the wise nodded and then went sound asleep right along with the foolish (verse 5). Today the Bible is called into question and denied from so many different angles that few of us seem to believe it as we profess to do, any more.

We are influenced too much by the scoffers mentioned at II Peter 3:3-6 who do not really believe any more that the end of the world is stealing upon us. That is exactly how the flood came upon all but eight in Noah's day. Do you really believe the end of this world will come any time soon?

I John 4:1-3 tells us that false prophets began to go forth even in the apostolic days. He says that these are of Antichrist, and that spirits should be tested before we accept them. The Holy Spirit confesses the virgin birth, the sinless life, the sacrificial death, the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and his imminent bodily second coming. Any spirit that diverges from this is of Antichrist. Therefore, our indifference to the signs of the times is of Antichrist today.

The best teaching and examples of what a church can be and should be are contained in the early chapters of Acts, following the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church on Pentecost. Let it be clearly understood by all that the age of miracles ended with the apostolic age. But the presence and the guiding and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit did not depart from the church then or at any time since the apostolic age ended. The Spirit was to abide with the church in a special office until the end of the age.

In conclusion, let us note a few highlights of this early period in the Jerusalem church. Acts 2:42 says they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. With this condition prevailing in the church:

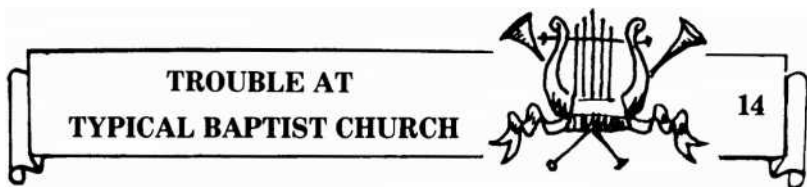
(1) Peter and John healed a lame man and brought the joy of the Holy Spirit into his life when he had expected nothing more than a miserable dole of money. His case was to show to him and others that there are more important things in life than what we may get in a material way (Acts 3:2-8).

(2) Peter preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:4) and five thousand believed. Peter did this though he and the others went to jail for it. How many would go to jail for Christ today?

(3) At Acts 5:1-11, we have the case of the two church members, Ananias and Sapphira, who were stricken dead because they lied to God with the Spirit convicting them not to do so (verses 4, 9). God removed this hindering force from the church because the church had a great zeal for truth and a great love for the cause. He probably leaves people like these in the church today because few of us seem to care very much one way or the other what goes on.

(4) In that early church (Acts 8:4), those who were scattered abroad by persecution went everywhere preaching the word. If they had loved the world, and if their hope had been dim, they would have gone forth bewailing their own ill fortune. But they were vitally aware that they were only sojourners here, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The message of the resurrection was real and vital to those who preached the gospel (Acts 4:33), for they had seen the glorified Jesus go into Heaven, and they had heard the heavenly promise that He was coming again (Acts 1:10, 11). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit was continually refreshing their minds concerning these things (John 16:8).

Our greatest need today is — by repentance, self denial, faith, prayer, and earnest study — to allow our profession to become a living reality within us again.



In a recent Sunday morning service, the Typical Baptist Church, Anywhere, Arkansas, was inadvertently thrown into an uproar from which it appears this church will not soon recover. They were having the preliminary exercises for the eleven o'clock preaching service when the song, "Amazing Grace," was selected. The song leader, according to his later explanation, became so engrossed in the heavenly words and cadence of the song that he simply sang it all the way through to the end, including the third verse, without really being conscious of what he was doing. As he launched into the third verse, however, he did notice an expression of amazement come over the faces of some in the congregation, but he was at a loss as to what it was about.

No sooner had the number been finished than a middle-aged brother sprang to his feet in apparent great agitation and indignation; and when he had gained somewhat of control over his voice, he offered a motion that the church forthwith exclude the song leader from the fellowship on the grounds that his singing of the third verse of the song bordered on blasphemy. He went on to state that he had gone to church all of his life and he had never heard such a thing done before. He thought it was setting a very bad precedent before the young in the midst. He got a resounding second to his motion.

After the congregation had sat in indecision for a few moments, an elderly woman rose from her seat and addressed the pastor, who had come to the stand in the meantime. The woman apologized for not "keeping silence" in the church, but she went on to state that in her childhood churches commonly sang the third verse of the song right along with the rest of them. She asked the question: If it was all good and acceptable then, why is it so terrible now? The only answer to her question given was that it simply is not done any more.

When the woman had taken her seat, a diplomat (sometimes known as a compromiser) arose and addressed the meeting. He said he agreed the singing of the third verse was utterly out of place, but who had ever heard of anyone being excluded from the church? If they excluded very many they would have serious trouble meeting the church budget.

A progressive and forward looking young brother then arose and said he was terribly embarrassed that anyone would presume to defend such an outmoded custom as the singing of the third verse of a song. He said he had attended the general youth meetings since he was a child and he had never heard the third verse of a song sung at such a meeting. Later he had attended some of the big associational meetings, and he had never! never! heard this breach of Christian etiquette perpetrated in one of those meetings. Cutting his eyes in the direction of some of the older men of the church, he added pointedly that he had never seen a preacher get on his knees to pray in one of these meetings either.

The pastor then addressed the church to the effect that they should restrain themselves and keep the peace at any cost. It had taken years to build the church to where it was, and no one should contribute to the tearing down of what had been built, regardless of what his convictions might be on the issue involved. He pointed out that any friction in the church would detract from his popularity as a pastor in the denomination. It would make it harder for him to get another pastorate that would pay well if this thing came to the knowledge of the public.

When the church had failed to come to any agreement, an elderly deacon suggested that they seek the counsel of an aged preacher who lived in the area. He had been known for his wise leadership in past years. He came at their invitation, and in a questions and answers session the following points were made:

First, it was true long ago the churches sang the hymns in their entirety. These hymns glorified God, edified the people, and generally bore a connected message to the hearer. They lost much of their meaning if part of the song was omitted.

Second, convention singing began to change all this about fifty years ago when it swept the country with its claim of "singing for the glory of God." The convention songs glorified the singers instead of God. The rhythm of them appealed to the feet and not to the heart. If a verse or two were omitted,

nothing worthwhile was lost. It only gave more time for others to show off themselves as song leaders. This kind of singing was then inevitably injected into the churches to the great injury of spirituality in this part of the services.

Third, the counsel of the aged preacher was that the church return to the old ways of seeking the Lord and worshipping Him instead of seeking self-advancement and self-glorification. Some urged that his advice be followed; others said he was nothing but an old "fogey."

The matter was dropped so far as any church action was concerned. There is an outward show of fellowship in the Typical Baptist Church. Inwardly there are grudges and animosities that will last for years. Generally, the song leader omits the third verse of the song without any regard to how it disrupts the total message carried by the song. Occasionally he announces apologetically that the entire song will be sung. At these times, while about half the congregation sing the third verse, the other half sit in silence and glare.

What is ever to become of Typical Church?



“What are the most essential doctrines of the Bible?”

Every Bible teaching is important. There is no part of the Bible that may be considered non-essential in the broader sense. But there are some Bible teachings which are more vital as relates to the ultimate goal of the Bible than are others.

The Bible bears abundant testimony to the importance of all its teachings. For instance, Jesus told the Jews either that they were searching the Scriptures, or that they should search the Scriptures, because they thought that they had eternal life in the Old Testament. He went on to say those Scriptures testify of him (John 5:34). II Timothy 3:15 says the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. David says the word of the Lord is a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path (Psalm 119:105).

Though the Bible treats a thousand and one different subjects with varying degrees of completeness, these are all brought in because of their relation to one primary goal of the Bible. This goal is to tell about the creation, the fall, and the redemption of the human race.

The evidence that the Bible is addressed to mankind is so abundant as to make it unnecessary to offer proof of the matter. Man is the one intelligent, reasoning, and spirit-capacitated creature of the material creation. Having these potentials, it is of paramount importance to man to know just who and what he is, where he came from, why he is here, and where he is going when he leaves this present life. The Bible gives the only satisfactory and satisfying answers to these questions regardless of what infidels may say to the contrary.

As to those principles that we call “doctrines,” many of them change from one age or dispensation to another. The most prominent of these ages in Bible discussion are the law age as

related to the nation Israel, and the grace age as related to the church of Jesus Christ. Some comparisons will illustrate the point:

(1) Circumcision signified an effort to purify the flesh in order that it might be a fit habitation for the Spirit; baptism signifies an abandonment of the flesh in favor of a walk in the Spirit.

(2) The animal sacrifices pointed forward to a Christ who had not yet died for mankind; the Lord's Supper looks backward to the broken body and the shed blood which have already been accomplished on the cross.

(3) The Sabbath pointed forward to the remote future when there would be a Sabbath rest for Israel in the Millennium; Sunday, the first day of the week, commemorates the fact that there is now a spiritual Sabbath rest for the people of God in the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of salvation (Hebrews 4:9). All these illustrate the point that methods of service and worship do change from one age to another to set forth certain spiritual principles.

Some things in the Bible never change from the fall of Adam back in the garden of Eden to the end of the world. Let us note the three primary doctrines that do not change from one age to another:

(1) The doctrine of the total depravity of mankind does not change. In Eden, Adam sinned and came short of the glory of God. Moses sinned when he smote the rock the second time in the wilderness. David, the great king of Israel, sinned when he committed adultery and murder in the matter of the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Peter sinned when he denied Jesus in the crucial hour. The Corinthian church sinned in their perverting the Lord's Supper. The Laodicean church sinned in their trusting in their worldly human resources. All men have fallen short in all generations. It has been a uniform story with reference to all of us. Romans 3:23 is sufficient proof for all these matters.

(2) The second doctrine that never changes is one of the most vital, the doctrine of salvation by grace (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Adam would have been made positively righteous by eating of the fruit of the tree of life in Eden (Genesis 2:9). Hence, he would have received a gift of grace from God. The virtue of making righteous life permanent was in the fruit of the tree. All the merit that could have accrued to Adam would have been in his choice, and the virtue itself would have come from God through the tree of life.

Since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, since every believer is saved on the basis of repentance and faith, and since all irresponsibles — little children and mental incompetents — are saved unconditionally, then salvation is always by grace, without any merit on the part of the ones saved.

(3) The third vital, unchanging doctrine of the Bible is the eternal security of all who are saved. If all understood the way of salvation, then they could accept the teaching of eternal security. The way of salvation is designated as a birth at John 3:3, 5 and I Peter 1:23; and, a spiritual birth is indicated as the way of salvation six times in the First Epistle of John. Both II Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15 indicate that salvation is not a moral reformation as many believe, but it is a new creation, or it makes a new creation, in the one who is born again of the Spirit of God. It is just as logical to suppose one born into the world could go out of existence as to suppose one born of the Spirit could cease to exist, or cease to be a born child of God.

I Peter 1:5 mentions that we are kept through faith in the power of God unto salvation. II Thessalonians 3:3 says the Lord will make us steadfast and keep us from the evil one (Greek text). II Timothy 1:12 says Paul is persuaded the Lord is able to keep what He has committed to him. When we once commit ourselves to the Lord in repentance and faith, He then takes over the matter of keeping us forever. Hence there is eternal security to the saved.

Thus, the most important story in the Bible is the story of the creation, the fall, and the redemption of man. The most vital doctrines are total depravity, salvation by grace, and eternal security.

“What is Hell? Can people in Hell see people in Heaven as the rich man saw Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, in the sixteenth chapter of Luke?”

The word “Hell” is used fifty-four times in the King James Version of the Bible. Thirty-one of these usages are in the Old Testament and twenty-three of them are in the New Testament.

The Old Testament usages are all translations of the Hebrew word, *Sheol*, which means “the unknown world.” Men did not normally come back to tell the living what *Sheol* was like. *Sheol* is also translated “grave” thirty-one times and “pit” three times. It would have been much clearer if the word had been given a uniform translation meaning the unseen region where the spirits of the dead go to await the resurrection. There are other words in the Hebrew language which clearly mean “grave” and “pit” without forcing *Sheol* into a context which it was never meant to have. *Sheol* seems to have the same meaning as the Greek word *Hades*.

In the New Testament, there are three words in the Greek which are rendered as Hell. The first of these is *Hades*, “the unseen world.” It is used ten times and it is always rendered “Hell.” It is the place where both the rich man on the one hand, and Abraham and Lazarus on the other, were described as being in the sixteenth chapter of Luke. Though they were near enough together to see one another and to converse back and forth, their conditions were about as far apart as could possibly be.

The second Greek word translated Hell is *Gehenna*. This is the Greek adaptation of the Hebrew expression which means valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the city dump heap burned perpetually. The significance is in the idea of

continual burning, indicating the eternal burning in the place of final torment for the unsaved. *Gehenna* is used twelve times in the New Testament. It is always translated Hell, and it is always used in solemn warning of that terrible place of eternal burning. In every instance except James 3:6 it is spoken of by Jesus Himself.

Tartarus is used only one time in the New Testament, at II Peter 2:4. In Greek mythology it refers to a fiery pit of thick darkness in the lower part of *Hades*. In the verse cited above it refers to the prison house where sinning angels are kept, awaiting the day of judgment. Actually, it refers to the same place as *Gehenna*. It is the place of eternal burning in both cases.

The Old Testament indicates there were two compartments in *Sheol*. The lower one is called "the pit", and it had bars. It was for those who are to go to the final place of burning. The upper region was for the spirits of the saved dead.

The *Hades* of the New Testament likewise had two regions, one for the saved and the other for the unsaved. This is chiefly revealed in the sixteenth chapter of Luke, where the dead are all in the common condition of death, but one group are comforted, and the other are tormented.

It is suggested that the lake of fire is not in operation as yet, but having passed out of time into eternity through death, the rich man was tormented by anticipation, and Lazarus was comforted by the anticipation of what awaited him in Heaven. These things are so real that it is almost as if those in the condition of death were already embracing the realities of their eternal future estate. It does not seem very logical to have the rich man actually burning in Hell until the resurrection, then taking him out, judging, condemning him, and then sending him right back to where he has already been in torment for a long time.

Now let us begin to work up to the matter of the present condition of the dead, and how it came to be that way. As the result of Adam's selling out the human race to the Devil, not only did the sentence of death fall on all men, but also, all the dead must remain in death until final and complete salvation is accomplished in Christ. This salvation comes in steps, or stages. First, there is the salvation of the spirit, accomplished in the new birth. Second, there is the salvation of the life, which is progressive and is never fully accomplished in life.

Third, there is the period of waiting in death, where the saved are comforted and the unsaved are tormented by anticipation of what is to come in the future (Luke 16:25).

After the period of waiting in death, there comes first the resurrection of the saved wherein we are judged, and each one begins to enter into his final eternal condition. A thousand years later, the unsaved are resurrected and judged at the white throne judgment (Revelation 20:5-15), and they are all cast into the lake of fire to remain forever. While the unsaved as soon as they die begin to see very vividly what their final destiny is to be, I do not believe they are actually cast into the lake of fire until after the white throne judgment, though they suffer terribly by anticipation.

As to the why of death, II Corinthians 4:4 refers to the Devil as the god of the world. At Job 1:7, Satan tells Jehovah in, effect, that he has been in the earth running his legitimate business. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that the Devil has the power (really the might) of death. Death must hold a certain amount of sway until Christ progressively destroys every claim of the Devil.

The saved dead went into the prison house of death - *Sheol*, and they remained there until Jesus died and likewise entered by his spirit (I Peter 3:18, 19). This is why the Old Testament saints were all their lifetime held in bondage to the fear of death (Hebrew 2:15). It is true, however, that God held the Devil in restraint, even in the realm of death, for the saved were comforted there.

Now let us try to trace the steps of Jesus in death. At John 12:31, Jesus facing the cross says, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Something that would happen in His death would give a great setback to the Devil.

Hebrews 2:14 says that through death Jesus would destroy him who had the might of death, that is the Devil. Ephesians 4:9 says that Christ descended first into the lower parts of the earth. This was exactly where both *Sheol* and *Hades* were reputed by the ancients to be. Ephesians 4:10 says the same Christ who descended to this region also ascended to the utmost heights of Heaven. Ephesians 4:8 states that when He ascended, He led captive captivity. In Revelations 1:18, Jesus identifies Himself this way: "I am he that liveth, and was dead;

and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of Hades.” (Greek text).

The picture is clear. When Jesus died, His body was sealed up in the tomb of Joseph. His spirit went the way of all disembodied spirits into *Sheol* or *Hades*. What happened there, in detail, the Scriptures do not seem to tell us. But evidently Jesus entered into the house of the strong man (Matthew 12:29), bound him, and spoiled his goods by taking the spirits of the saved out of the prison house of death. He ascended up on high, taking the host of the saved spirits with Him, and He deposited them beneath the throne of God to await the resurrection (Revelation 6:9-11). That is where the spirits of all the saved dead are now, and it is where the spirits of the saved go when they die. They are now completely removed from the region of *Sheol* or *Hades*, and they are no longer in the proximity of the spirits of the unsaved dead. These latter are still where they are represented as being at Luke 16:23, 24. The saved spirits are eagerly awaiting their reunion with their bodies, for a person's body is an integral part of him too.

One other situation needs to be noted. Enoch and Elijah both went bodily into Heaven. Moses died and was buried, but Michael came down and disputed with the Devil over the body of Moses at some unspecified time. Michael took the body of Moses into Heaven, for Moses had the same kind of body which Jesus and Elijah had on the Mount of Transfiguration. The reference to Michael and the Devil is at Jude 9.

Besides all these, there is the great host of saints who came out of the graves after the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 27:51-53). I believe they went into Heaven in bodily form as a firstfruits of the resurrection. The offering of the firstfruits in Israel (Leviticus 23:10) was of a sheaf, and not of a single stalk, or a single ear of grain, (I Peter 3:18-20).



“Please explain the literal meaning and the theological connotations (derived meanings) and denotations (actual meanings) of the word, atonement.”

To begin with, let it be stated that “atonement” is one of those theological terms which does not seem to exist in the original text of the Scriptures. W. E. Vine, a careful student of New Testament words, says in substance that “at-one-ment,” which some make of the word “atonement” is foreign to Scripture teaching. There simply is no word in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures which says what the English “atonement” says.

The Hebrew word *kaphaa* is rendered “atonement” about eighty times in the Old Testament King James Version. The verb form of this word means “to cover,” and the noun form of it means “a covering.” It is translated by other words about forty-five times, but it always retains the idea of covering.

At Genesis 6:14, Noah is told to “cover the ark with a covering” (of pitch). This covering of pitch kept the waters of judgment from destroying those who had taken refuge inside. This is like the covering of blood that the Israelites put on the doorposts the night that the firstborn were slain in judgment when Israel came out of Egypt (Exodus 12:7, 12, 13).

Beginning with Exodus 29:36 and continuing through the law books, many times it is said in the Hebrew text that blood shall be used to cover the sins of the people, and to cover the flaws of the implements, vessels, etc. that were used in the ceremonial services; see, for instance, Leviticus 16:33. Of course, the common version of the Bible calls all of these “making an atonement.”

The sum of these matters is that God hates sin, but the evidence is rather scanty that He hates sinners. The blood of

the animal sacrifices was used to cover the sins of the people from the eyes of God until the time God would send His own Son to become the sacrifice that would forever take away the sins of those who come to God aright.

A good example of the attitude of God toward the sinner is seen in Eden after Adam had deliberately gone against the counsel of God and had heeded the counsel of the Devil. The man sought to hide himself from the presence of God, indicating he was at enmity toward God. But God gave every indication He was not at enmity toward the man, but rather sought the friendship and restoration of the man. The first bloodshed was consummated to get the skins of the innocent animals to make coverings for the penitent man and woman. The sins in the human pair were covered so that the Lord could accept those whom he had loved all the while; see Ephesians 2:4, 5.

The justice of God demands that sin be utterly put out of His sight, but His love for mankind drives Him to the utmost extent to make provision to bring man into a condition wherein he can be accepted as God's own. In Old Testament times, Christ had not yet become "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The animal sacrifices were introduced as types and promises that Christ would come and take away sin as is pictured in the scapegoat of Leviticus 16:10, 21, 22. So, God allowed the sins of penitent believers to be covered by the animal sacrifices until Christ should come and put away sin once for all (Hebrews 9:25-28). God saved penitent believers in Old Testament times with their sins merely covered. But, He did not bring them into the intimate relationship of sonship which is described throughout the New Testament after Christ had come and forever put away sin. Our new relationships to God since Christ came and took away our sins is what is new about the New Testament.

When we come to the New Testament Scriptures, the word "atonement" is used only one time, at Romans 5:11. Elsewhere, the forms of the word *katallasso* are rendered "reconcile," "reconciliation," etc. It is used about fourteen times in the New Testament, and it always refers to a change in the attitude of man, both in his being saved and in his committing himself to God for service. It would be man's side of atonement, if there were such a thing as atonement in Bible terminology. Let it be emphasized that the Scriptures do not say God is reconciled to man, for God is not at enmity toward man to begin with.

The Greek word that describes the reaction of God when man comes to him in repentance and faith is *hilaskomai*, “to be cheerful or happy.” The English word “hilarity” comes from this Greek word, and hilarity means such things as funny, cheerful, and happy. In Old Testament times, God could be cheerful toward man because the sins of man were covered from his sight by the blood of the animal sacrifices. In the New Testament, God is cheerful toward the penitent sinner because Jesus, the Lamb of God, with His own blood has washed, loosened, and taken away the sins which before were merely covered (John 1:29; Revelation 1:5). God is not at enmity with the sinner, but with his sins. I believe this proposition will still stand, though Romans 9:13 says the Lord hated Esau and loved Jacob. It was only when Esau was identified with his sins that the Lord hated him. Ultimately, God loves all sinners alike and he equally desires the salvation of all, for God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

The Greek word *hilaskomai* which names the change in God whereby He accepts sinners as His children, is translated “propitiate” and “propitiation” in the English versions. It means “to make cheerful by giving satisfaction.” The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the great sacrifice chapter of the Old Testament. The eleventh verse says in substance that God would see the travail of the soul of Jesus and would be satisfied. Sin was judged and punished fully in Jesus. Since it is already fully paid for by Jesus in death, God can justly forgive it in sinners and put it away from them in salvation.

Thus, God is propitiated, or satisfied, concerning our sins because they have borne full judgment in our kinsman, Jesus, in His death on the cross. It can only be repeated that God was never our enemy, and He did not need to be brought into “at-one-ment” with us. His justice, however, demanded that sin be judged and paid for, and this was fully done in Christ. From the beginning, God has been eager to receive us as His sons and daughters so soon as justice would allow it to be done.

This is not the easiest Bible subject to present rightly by any means. But let it be stated again, although sinful man rebels against God, God is not the enemy of man. God loves the sinner but hates the sin which separates man from God’s holy fellowship. Then something happens to change the relationship of each toward the other. Man is “reconciled,” or changed, into a friend to God; and, God is “propitiated” because the necessary

price has been paid for sin which allows God to receive the individual as though he were not a sinner. Happily, through Christ, God proceeds to make the sinner into the glorious eternal son of God which man was originally designed to be.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive study of Hebrew names. It is intended to consider briefly certain key names that relate to the nation Israel. Let it be stated that these key names seem always to be prophetic of the character and the works of the men who bore the name. Therefore, we must conclude that God directed in the giving of the names.

Several names are given to Abraham, the forefather of the Israelite nation. The original name of Abraham was Abram. Abram means in the Hebrew language, "High Father," or "Exalted Father." The covenant was spoken to him three times while he yet bore this name. He was to go to another land, and Jehovah would make of him a great nation. His seed was to possess all the land which his eyes could behold from a mountain top for an everlasting possession because he had separated from Lot, who was a worldly man. He was given assurance that a spiritual seed should come from him when he and his wife Sarah were very old people. Yet, the covenant embraced only the nation of Israel. Abram was to be the high, or exalted father of this one nation.

When Abram was ninety-nine years of age, the Almighty God, who gives material blessings to His people, appeared to him and once again renewed and enlarged the terms of the covenant. Ham was added to the name Abram, making it Abraham. Ham, or hum, in Hebrew means "to hum." Thus, Abraham was to become the father of such a multitude of nations that it would produce a humming sound when they all should be assembled together in Heaven and should talk of the glory of God. Abraham here was made the spiritual father or the spiritual portion of all the nations of the world. This has a special application to the church of Jesus Christ, a relationship prominently discussed in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. Remember that it was in connection with his being made the father of a humming multitude of nations that the name Abram

was changed to Abraham — “the Father of a Humming Multitude” — that is, all the faithful saved of later generations. The account of the changing of the name of Abraham is told in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis.

Abraham is given another descriptive title at Genesis 14:13. The title, Hebrew, means “a sojourner” — one who passes by and goes on somewhere else. It is more frequently used in Exodus of the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt than anywhere else in the Bible. In the New Testament, it refers more often to the language than to the people. Applied to all the people of God, typically it suggests the shortness and uncertainty of life in the world, and that we are all passing on to a permanent dwelling either in Heaven or Hell. Accommodated to other names of the covenant people, “Hebrew” is the exact equivalent of “Israelite,” embracing all the descendants of Jacob. These people are more commonly called “Israel” or “Israelites” than anything else.

The foregoing are all names that apply to Abraham. But let no one think these names include all the descendants of Abraham. First of all, Abraham had a nephew who traveled with him on much of his journey through life. His name was Lot. Also, Abraham had a son named Ishmael, who was born of an Egyptian bondmaid named Hagar. Abraham later married a woman named Keturah, who bore him six sons, who are listed in the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis. These, along with Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, moved to the east and the south and grew into Arabian and Egyptian nations. It is they who are contesting the land of the covenant with the Jews at the present time.

Isaac was the son of the covenant, whom Sarah bore to Abraham when she was ninety years of age and he was a hundred. The name Isaac means “Laughter.” The first application is to the fact that Sarah laughed in disbelief when the angel told Abraham that she would bear a son (Genesis 18:12). The second application is to the fact that she laughed in great joy when Isaac was born (Genesis 21:6). It is like the case of the Christian who thinks his problems are so hard that not even God can solve them; then he laughs in great joy when God does resolve the things he thought to be impossible. Isaac seems to have been merely a link in the chain of succession in Israel, and he left no name comparable with Abraham and Israel.

Jacob was the second-born of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Literally his name means “Heel grasper,” referring to the fact that Jacob seized Esau by the heel when they were in the process of being born. It seems there was a figure of speech in Hebrew to the effect that a heel grasper was one who tripped up someone else by grasping his heel, and then taking something that the victim had. It is prophetic of the fact, that, though Esau should have received the family birthright by virtue of the fact he was born first, yet, Jacob, the second-born, came in and by trickery got the birthright to himself. It typifies the fact that the second-born always prevailed over the firstborn in Old Testament times. The spiritual lesson is that we begin to receive our spiritual inheritance long before the firstborn, our fleshly man, receives his inheritance in the resurrection from the dead. Only in the coming of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, did the firstborn begin to come into his birthright. This birthright is the redemption of the body. The name Jacob certainly should teach us that none of us by nature and works is worthy of salvation. If Jacob had received what he deserved, Esau would have killed him as he said he would do. Truly, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Romans 6:23).

After Jacob had fled away from the home to escape the wrath of his brother Esau, and after he had sojourned twenty years at Haran with his uncle Laban, when Jacob was returning home to face Esau with reference to all the wrong he had done to Esau, an angel of God met Jacob in the way, and the most famous wrestling match in history took place, (Genesis 32:24-30). The crippling of Jacob signifies how God someway cripples us when He wants us to serve Him and we refuse because of human stubbornness or human ambition. When Jacob, “the supplanter,” broken by adversity, became submissive to God, the angel changed his name from “Supplanter” to “Prince of God,” or Israel. From this time onward, when the material affairs of Jacob are in prominence, he is usually called Jacob, and when his spiritual and eternal welfare are involved, he is usually called Israel, literally “Royal Man of God.”

The name Israel rightly applies to all the descendants of Jacob, but after the dividing of the kingdom of Israel in the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, I Kings, chapter twelve, the original kingdom became known as Judah, and the group who

withdrew and formed a new kingdom were known as the kingdom of Israel. This brings us to the consideration of the most complex name connected with the covenant people of Old Testament times; this name is "Jew." The history of the Jew is this:

The fourth son of Jacob, by Leah, was named Judah (Genesis 29:35). This Hebrew name means "Praise." Leah praised Jehovah because of this fourth son whom she had borne. At Genesis 49:8, it is said that the brethren of Judah should praise him. This passage also says the rulership should not depart from Judah until universal peace come. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. I Corinthians 15:25-28 says he must reign until all enemies are put down. This is in fulfillment of the prophetic passage in Genesis.

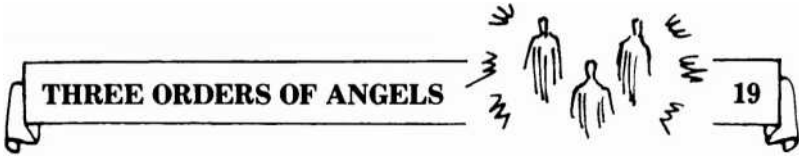
In the division of the kingdom of Israel, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained in the original kingdom. Since the seat of religious service was in Jerusalem, we would expect most of the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, to be congregated there also. These three tribes became the southern kingdom of Judah, and the other tribes formed the northern kingdom of Israel.

It is generally believed that the name "Jew" came to be applied to all the tribes of Israel in later times. The writer has not been able to accept this view. As has previously been pointed out, the northern kingdom was called Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah. The northern kingdom went into the Babylonian captivity and, according to the Bible record, they never returned. They became the "lost tribes of Israel," and the writer believes they are still the lost tribes until today. It is suggested that the regathering, the recognition, and the salvation of the lost tribes is alluded to at Matthew 24:31. This is immediately after the coming of Christ in glory to set up His millennial reign on the earth. In the meantime, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi constitute the people that we know as the Jews. At Acts 21:39, Paul tells us he was a Jew. At Philippians 3:5, he tells us he was of the tribe of Benjamin. But where is any such thing said about any of the ten tribes who went into the first Babylonian captivity? At Luke 2:36, it is said the prophetess Anna was of the tribe of Asher, but it does not say she was a Jewess. So, it seems we should designate the known part of the house of Israel as "Jews," and the unknown portion as "the lost tribes."

(Note: For the account of the two captivities read II Kings 17 and II Kings 25.)

“Gentile” remains the one word to be included in this study. Really there is no such thing as a Gentile in the original writings of the Bible. In both the Hebrew and the Greek, the words simply mean “nation,” and they are so translated in the majority of instances. In fact, taking the Hebrew and the Greek together, these words are translated “nation” four hundred thirty-seven times; “Gentile” one hundred twenty-three times; and “heathen” one hundred forty-seven times.

Exactly the same word designates Israel as a nation in many instances. It is true that Israel, or the Jews for that matter, is often held in contrast with the other nations of the world; but it should be expressed as “the Jews and the other nations,” or “Israel and the other nations.” This way, we would avoid a distinction that simply does not exist.



THREE ORDERS OF ANGELS

19

“How is it that some fallen angels are shut up in a dark prison, (Jude 6; II Peter 2:4) while some of them are working freely on earth (Mark 5:9)?”

In discussing the subject of angels in general, it is needful for us to note that there are three manners of life in the created universe. These are spiritual life, mental (or intellectual) life, and physical life. These are enumerated at I Thessalonians 5:23 as spirit, and soul, and body; the soul refers to mental (or conscious) life, and the body refers to physical life. Man has all three of these lives; angels have two of them — mental and spiritual; and animals have one — physical life.

The evidence of the Bible is that God created three orders of angels — one order to minister in each of the three realms of life in the universe. Each of these orders of angels had a chief angel, or archangel. Their names and sphere of ministry were: Michael, the archangel in the realm of the spirit; Gabriel, the archangel in the realm of intelligence; and Helel, who became the Devil, to rule in the realm of the physical. The evidence on this matter is not as tangible as some might wish, but I very earnestly believe the above is true. We shall now note the reference to Michael and Gabriel and a few of the many references to Helel, or Lucifer, or Satan, the Devil.

Ten men in the Bible were named Michael, which means “Who is like God?” When the name refers to the archangel, however, we have the following five scriptures: At Daniel 10:13, 21, Michael comes to assist another heavenly character, whom I believe to be Gabriel, in a conflict with Persia against Israel. Both Gabriel and Michael oppose Persia in favor of Daniel’s people. At Daniel 12:1, Michael again stands for Israel in the battle of Armageddon.

At Jude 9, Michael contends with the Devil over the body of Moses. I believe this was when Michael, who wields the spirit power of resurrection, came down to take the body of Moses out of the grave so he would “have something to wear” on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3).

At Revelation 12:7, Michael fights a war in Heaven against the dragon, who was cast out of Heaven when Jesus returned there in triumph after His sojourn on earth. Spirit is the power of resurrection, and Michael is commonly associated with resurrection power. This is chiefly why I believe he is the archangel in the realm of spirit.

Gabriel is the archangel in the realm of mind, or intellect. There are just four references to him in the Bible. Gabriel means “mighty one of God.” At Daniel 8:16, Gabriel is told to make Daniel understand the vision which had to do both with the conquest of Media and Persia by Greece, and with the rise of Antichrist in the last days.

At Daniel 9:21, Gabriel came to explain to Daniel about the seventy weeks of years that were determined to bring the chastisement of Israel to a close and to bring them into everlasting righteousness. In both of these instances, Gabriel explained things that pertained to the human mind, or understanding.

At Luke 1:19, Gabriel came to explain to Zacharias about the coming birth of John the Baptist. At Luke 1:26, Gabriel was sent from God to announce to Mary that she was to become the mother of Jesus, the Savior, who was to be the Son of the Most High God, and He was to reign in Israel forever. Again, the message of Gabriel was in explanation of things which the mind of a human being could not comprehend without help. There is no doubt in my mind that Gabriel is the archangel in the intellectual realm.

When we come to the third archangel, the evidence is far more abundant, and it is far more complex for that matter. One notable passage is Isaiah 14:12-17. Here the angel is called Helel, “light bearer,” in the Hebrew language. He is called “Lucifer” in the English. Lucifer is a Latin expression also meaning “light bearer.” He has fallen from Heaven. He perverted the nations. He said he would place his throne exactly where Jesus was enthroned when he returned to Heaven after his life on earth. He was finally to be brought down to Hell. I believe this was before the creation of mankind.

The cities mentioned in verse 17 are merely working systems, and not necessarily cities as we know them at all.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 tells about an anointed cherub, typified by the king of Tyre, who was magnificent, but came to disaster. He was wise and beautiful. He had been in Eden, bedecked with precious stones. He was an anointed covering cherub, made so by God. He had been upon the holy mountain of God. He was perfect in his ways for a time; later iniquity was found in him. He was cast out of Heaven because of his self-exaltation.

It is insisted again that the king of Babylon in the one instance, and the king of Tyre in the other, were not the real subjects of address, but they were merely weak forerunners of the Devil as he is to be manifested and destroyed in Antichrist.

How did a glorious angel become the Devil? Colossians 1:19 says God was pleased for all fulness to dwell in Christ. All intelligent beings are given the privilege of choosing their own destiny in Christ. The angels were created sinless, even as man was. But each angel was given the privilege of choosing his own destiny in Christ. Each one of them did this once for all in the distant past, before the creation of man. The angels had no "second chance" because they could look into the future and see much of their destiny. Their choice was once for all.

When Helel raised the issue, each angel chose between him and God. Some of each order of angels chose to go with the Devil in his effort to supplant Christ, the Son (Isaiah 14:14).

The angels of the spiritual and intellectual realms were cast out of Heaven. Because there was no other place for them to go, they were bound in the pits of darkness to await the final judgment, (Jude 6; II Peter 2:4). Heaven had been their habitation. They will be tormented forever in Hell.

Helel and the other angels of his order who rebelled against God were cast out of Heaven to the earth. There is considerable evidence to this end. Isaiah 14:12 says they were cut down to the ground. Ezekiel 28:17 says he was to be cast to the ground. At Luke 10:18, Jesus says he saw Satan falling from Heaven as a flash of lightning.

I believe beyond a doubt that this Helel, Lucifer, Satan, the serpent, and whatever else he is called, became the Devil, and those angels of his order who fell with him became the demon spirits who are working so abundantly on the earth today. The

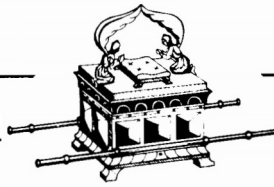
demon spirits indicated a previous acquaintance with Jesus, and they feared Him; see Matthew 8:31 and Mark 1:23-26.

When the angels of the material realm fell upon the earth, they wrecked the first creation with wild abandon. How long this condition lasted no one knows. It is the right explanation of the so-called geologic ages. God began to move to recover the earth from the Devil and his angels when He created man and made him the lord of the newly recreated earth. Man sold his rulership out to the Devil, and the Devil continued as the god of the world throughout the Old Testament times; see Job 1:7, where Satan tells Jehovah, in effect, that he has been on the earth running his legitimate business. He was also going into Heaven to accuse the saints (Job 1:9-11).

When Jesus went back to Heaven in triumph after His ministry on earth, the Devil and his angels were cast out of Heaven permanently; but, he now is working on earth with a fury which he has never equalled before (Revelation 12:5-12; I Peter 5:8).

After the white throne judgment, the Devil and all fallen angels will be cast into the lake of fire, and they, along with all unsaved people, will be tormented forever.

The King James Version speaks as though there were many devils. Actually, there is only one Devil, but there are many demon spirits. They are different words in the Greek text — *diabolos*, “devil,” and *daimon*, “demon.” Satan and Devil refer to the same one, and they both have the same meaning — “opposer.”



“Does Hebrews 6:4-8 teach falling from grace? What does Hebrews 10:26-39 teach? If they do not teach falling from grace, what do they mean?”

The very heart of the book of Hebrews is stated at Hebrews 8:6, which reads:

“But now hath he (Christ the Highpriest) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”

Christ did not establish a new plan of salvation when he came into the world. Since Adam cast the race into sin by his own fall back in the Garden of Eden, there has never been but one plan of salvation. This is repentance toward God and faith in Christ. Irresponsibles are saved unconditionally. When Jesus came to establish a new covenant, it was not a new plan of salvation. But it was, and is a new plan of life for the special people of God. From Abraham to Christ the special, or covenant, people of God was the nation Israel. From Christ to the end of the present age, the covenant people is the church of Jesus Christ. Failure to recognize this one fundamental fact is the root of many doctrinal errors of the religious world. Failure to recognize it is why false religions believe in baptismal regeneration. And, it is why many Baptists seem to be afraid that false teachers may prove baptismal regeneration to be a Bible doctrine. One can be saved without baptism, but he cannot be a member of a scriptural church without it.

Now let us note several other significant passages in Hebrews:

Hebrews 1:1, 2. God spoke to the (Israelite) fathers by the prophets, but he has spoken to us by His Son. The result is that Christ has given us a better rule of life than the prophets gave to Israel under the law.

Hebrews 2:2, 3. If Israel received severe judgment for disobedience under the law, we will receive more severe judgment for disobedience under the economy of a greater salvation, which began to be spoken by the Lord when he came into the world. This is the salvation of the life, and it is not the new birth.

Hebrews 8:6. Jesus gave us a better covenant than Israel had under the law. Again, this has to do with a way of life, and not with a new plan of salvation.

Hebrews 9:13-15. The blood of animals ceremonially purified the flesh of Israel temporarily, but the offerings had to be repeated yearly. But the blood of Christ purges our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And this blood gives us promise of eternal inheritance — assurance of salvation while we live in a sinful body in a sinful world.

Hebrews 12:18-23. In our service and worship we do not come to the wrathful God of judgment at Mount Sinai, where the sins of the people had not really been paid for as yet. But we do come through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the heavenly Jerusalem. Jesus has opened the way, and he has made the journey ahead of us as the righteous, crucified, risen, and glorified Son of man. He sits as our intercessor in the heights of Heaven as a glorified man at the right hand of the Most High God. Since he had pleased the Father well in all things as the Son of man, His intercession for His brethren is completely effective in every detail.

Now let us return to the two passages mentioned at the heading of this discussion.

Hebrews 6:4-8. This is the case of the Israelites who fell in the wilderness. See I Corinthians 10:1-5. Typically, all these people were saved by the blood of the Passover lamb. They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud (the Holy Spirit) and in the sea (water baptism). In this baptism they formally committed themselves to follow Moses, (who represents the Word of God) in the ways that he would lead them to the land of promise. Moses and the pillar of cloud (the Holy Spirit) always traveled the same road on the wilderness journey.

Later, from time to time, all the adults of this group sinned willfully and they ultimately fell dead in the wilderness, not arriving at the promised land to which they had solemnly

committed themselves to go. That is, they all died except Caleb and Joshua. A false preacher once set these forth as an example of saved people who fall from grace in the sense of losing their salvation. But he was very careful not to mention the case of Moses, who also fell in the wilderness for willfully sinning (Number 20:11, 12). But the same Moses appeared in glory with Jesus and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration many hundreds of years later (Luke 9:30, 31). Those who fell in the wilderness lost blessings which they might have enjoyed in the present life, and they lost reward which they might have had in the resurrection: but no one lost the new birth — no one ever became unborn!

The tenth chapter of Hebrews takes this same theme and applies it to the covenant people, the church, in the age in which we live. The writer continues to emphasize the fact that we have a far better covenant, or working rule, than Israel had under the law. Some specific points made are these:

Hebrews 7:19. The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in or a better hope did make something perfect. When we do the works of God — for instance, a scriptural baptism — we do a perfect work. When we preach salvation by grace, we are doing a perfect work. In this instance, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the (born) children of God (Romans 8:14-16), so we have full assurance of hope. The perfect thing is that very imperfect people do perfect works.

Hebrews 10:9, 10. The law could not take away sins. But Christ came, did the will of God, offered himself in our stead, and sanctified us once for all who are saved and committed to serve him according to His word. “Committed” is what sanctified means. On the other hand, the law kept calling sins to mind from year to year, because these sins had not actually been paid for.

Since both our position and our condition are far better under the grace rule, the writer warns us there will be far greater judgment if we willfully turn away from the grace rule. Again let it be stated that no one loses his salvation. But he may lose his walk in fellowship with the Lord and its many attendant blessings.

Now let us note some New Testament examples of those who sinned willfully.

Acts 5:1-10. Ananias and Sapphira were killed for lying to the Holy Spirit at a time when the Spirit was working mightily in the church at Jerusalem. But there is no more evidence that they went to Hell as a result of it than there is that Moses went to Hell for sinning willfully and dying for it in the wilderness.

John 13:26, 27. Judas Iscariot was never saved. He had belonged to the Devil as an unsaved man since he came to accountability, but Satan entered into him when he received the sop. I believe he made a final commitment here, and there was no more possibility of his being saved. There is a certain parallelism in his case to those who willfully depart from serving the Lord after they have made a solemn commitment to do so.

Churches apostatize, or depart from the faith, in such things as taking in unsaved members and resorting to unscriptural doctrines and practices (Revelation 2:5). Jesus was at the point of spewing the Laodicean church out of His mouth because of a condition of blatant worldliness that had come into it (Revelation 3:16, 17). Should this happen, no one would lose his salvation, but he would lose his church relationship unless he moved to another congregation. No, churches are sometimes rejected as such, but born again ones remain born again, and what God begets within us is not destroyed, either by ourselves or the Devil.

No one falls from grace at Hebrews 6:4-8, nor Hebrews 10:26-31, but some do fall out of a state of favor and communion with the Lord. They no longer have the guidance of the Holy Spirit promised to the church at John 14:15-18.



The problem of the salvation of Cornelius hinges on the close relationship that apparently existed between Cornelius on the one hand, and God and other heavenly beings on the other hand. This relationship does not seem at all consistent with an alien sinner, who is supposed to be at enmity with God. Some details of this relationship will be listed later. Can it be that we as Baptists have been drawn into a warped view of just how the term “salvation” is used in the New Testament?

In a footnote on John 1:17, Scofield seems to say the law of Moses was the plan of salvation which Israel had in Old Testament times. He goes on to indicate that salvation by grace is the new thing which Jesus introduced into the world. Of course, this is not so; but, if salvation by grace is not the new thing discussed throughout the New Testament, then what is? The only answer I have been able to find is that the church of Jesus Christ is the new and revolutionary thing in the New Testament.

As Baptist people, we believe that salvation by grace, based on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, goes all the way back to the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. The bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman refers to the death of Jesus as the Son of man. The bruising of the head of the serpent refers to the defeat of the Devil by the resurrection of Jesus in power and glory. He will never again be touched by the pangs of death (Genesis 3:15).

Down through the ages, God had dealt with various groups of people in various ways in regard to their lives and the testimony they were supposed to bear for Him. These plans of life and testimony have changed from time to time, but the plan of salvation by grace has never changed. If we would only accept and apply this fundamental principle to our Bible interpretation, we would get rid of a world of embarrassment

over such subjects as salvation by works, baptismal salvation, and falling from grace.

There are two covenants of God's dealing with mankind which overshadow by far all of the rest of them. They are the law of Moses, under which Israel operated from Moses until Christ, and the grace covenant, which is really the church covenant, which prevails from Christ until the end of the present age. Israel failed under the law covenant; but Jesus said we will succeed under the church covenant (Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:20). Israel failed because they could not subdue the flesh. In spite of the weakness of the flesh, we will succeed because our business is to tell the truth of God, instructed by the Word, and bolstered and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. This is the import of the discussion in the eighth chapter of Romans. In the seventh chapter, Paul said he had failed under the law because the law demanded the subduing of the flesh, which could not be subdued while man was yet in the flesh. In the eighth chapter, Paul teaches that the saved person, taught by the Word, led and enlightened by the Spirit, can and does do works of righteousness. While he is doing the positive works of righteousness, which are spiritual works, he is crowding the evil works of the flesh out of his life. It is just as simple as this: if a saved person uses his tongue to tell the doctrine of salvation by grace, he accomplishes two results: (1) he speaks a great spiritual truth that will stand forever, and (2) he prevents his tongue from telling a lie about how big a fish he caught or how smart his children are. Telling the truth about spiritual matters has a way of growing into a general habit, so that the preacher will gradually get out of the habit of lying about how big a fish he caught. This is what growth in grace amounts to.

It is repeated that the church economy, and not salvation by grace, is the thing that is made prominent in the New Testament. In preparing the way of the Lord, John preached repentance and faith, but he also went on to baptize the converts whom he made. The baptism had nothing to do with the new birth, except that it followed it. But baptism was absolutely necessary to get the disciples ready to go into the church when Jesus should come and call the church together around Himself.

Now let us get back to Cornelius and what Peter did for him and his household. It is very significant that Cornelius was a

Roman, and not a Jew. He and his kind were left out when Jesus sent the apostles on the limited commission (Matthew 10:5). He was not, at that time, denying salvation to the Romans, but he was sending the church and kingdom message only to the Jews. In Cornelius' day, Peter still wanted the kingdom message to be only for the Jews. But the great commission had already said, ". . . go ye into all the world, and make disciples of all nations. . ." Thus, Peter was compelled by the vision of the great sheet to change his view concerning the scope of the gospel which he was to preach.

Let us note some positive characteristics in the case of Cornelius:

(1) Cornelius was devout, or reverent, and he feared God. He prayed to God continually, and he gave much alms to the Jews (Acts 10:2).

(2) An angel visited Cornelius and said his prayers and alms had come into remembrance before God (vs. 3, 4).

(3) Both Cornelius and the Spirit sent the men to Peter at Joppa, and the angel told Cornelius to send them (vs. 5, 7, 8, 19, 20).

(4) The messengers said Cornelius was righteous and God-fearing (v. 22). They said Cornelius was instructed by an angel to send for Peter and to hear him.

(5) The angel had said the prayer was heard and the alms of Cornelius had come into remembrance before God (v. 31).

(6) Peter said fearing God and working righteousness is what God accepts (v. 35). Is working righteousness a prerequisite to the new birth? No.

(7) At verse 34, Peter begins to preach, and he says that in every nation the one fearing God and working righteousness is acceptable to God. If the new birth is the primary thing meant here, are we going to say there was no salvation to the Gentile nations up to this time? It would be far more logical and scriptural to say that for the first time since Moses, believers of the Gentile nations were brought into a covenant relationship

with God — in the church — on an equal basis, or a common level, with the Jews and other Israelites.

(8) In verse 34, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the words of Peter. The six Jewish church members who came with Peter from Joppa were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on those of other nations, for they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. They reacted exactly the way the Jerusalem church members had reacted on Pentecost (Acts 2:4), and not the way the church members had reacted when they were saved several years before Pentecost.

(9) Then Peter took what is probably the strangest vote that was ever taken of church members. He dared the Jewish brethren from Joppa to forbid water to baptize these Roman Gentiles. This can only imply that the Jews from Joppa had no intention of granting baptism to these Gentiles until they had seen proof that God had given them the same gift that they themselves had received. The household of Cornelius received the same thing Peter told the Jews they would receive if they would repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). God allowed them to receive a church gift before they were baptized because the Jewish brethren had no intention of granting baptism to people undeniably Gentiles.* This is the only instance of people receiving the “gift of the Holy Spirit” before they were baptized in water.

(10) At Acts 11:14, Peter quotes Cornelius as saying the angel said that Peter would tell Cornelius words whereby he and his house would be saved. Have we not yet learned that salvation comes in three steps, or stages?

First, there is the salvation of the spirit attained in the new birth.

Second, there is the salvation of the life (Acts 2:40), which continues throughout life. It is this salvation which Cornelius was seeking. It is graphically set forth at Hebrews 2:3. By seeking it, Cornelius would escape the fate of the nations described in the first chapter of Romans.

* In the case of the Samaritans, though racially mixed, they could claim lineage from Abraham, and they purportedly used the books of Moses as the basis of their religion. Ed. note.

The third step in salvation is the redemption of the body, attained in the resurrection (Romans 8:23).

Protestants have sought to minimize the church in the New Testament because they cannot measure up to its standards. Many Baptists have been influenced too much by the Protestant approach to the Scriptures. We need to look frankly and boldly at the New Testament presentation of the church and see what a vital and glorious thing it is.

It was only the scripturally baptized, duly constituted church that received the great visitation of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2). This was in fulfillment of the promise that began to be made by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11). The miraculous manifestation was taken away, but the Spirit remained permanently with the church (John 14:16; John 16:13).

The first church, located at Jerusalem, was a Jewish church. But Philip went to Samaria and made disciples there (Acts 8:5-8). However, these were only half-breed Jews, who had previously been despised and rejected by the Jews. Though Philip baptized these disciples, nothing unusual happened as yet, (Acts 8:12, 16). Peter and John were sent from the Jerusalem church to examine the Samaritan situation. When they decided it was legitimate, they organized the Samaritans into a church, and immediately they received the ministry of the Holy Spirit that belonged to a scriptural church (Acts 8:16, 17). The great emphasis is not on the fact that the Samaritans were saved, but it is on the fact that they were received as worthy material to go into a church. As a missionary, Philip brought them into the membership of the Jerusalem church. But Peter and John came and organized them into a separate church. When they did, the Samaritan group got exactly the same manifestation of the Holy Spirit that the original Jerusalem church got on Pentecost.

Though Baptists seem to want to stay as far away from the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church as they can, there is another demonstration of the Spirit on a new church which we need to note. It is the case of the disciples at Ephesus whom Paul found (Acts 19:1-7; Acts 18:24-26). They were evidently saved, but they had been baptized by Apollos, who had no authority to carry out the baptism of John the Baptist. They were saved but not scripturally baptized. When Paul had baptized them on the authority he received from the church at Antioch, they received, as a newly constituted church, the

same thing the Jerusalem church had received on Pentecost, the same thing the Samaritan church had received as soon as Peter and John had organized them into a church, and the same thing the household of Cornelius received when they accepted the message Peter had for them.

When the three issues listed here were resolved, there were no other issues of like nature. Therefore, there was no other repetition of the demonstration that took place on Pentecost. The miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit on churches ceased, but the guiding and enlightening work of the Holy Spirit in the churches goes on until today. This is why some religious groups hold steadfastly to fundamental truth, and some other do not.

KINDS OF SINS AND THEIR RESULTS

22

The predominant words for “sin” in both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament carry the idea of “missing a mark.” It is the figure of a bowman shooting at a target. When we look into the question of why the marksman misses the mark, we come up with several possible reasons: (1) he cannot shoot straight; (2) either his bow or his arrow might be defective, or (3) the goal is so far away that he cannot shoot that distance. Spiritually, man is beset with all kinds of imperfections and disabilities, and the goal of God’s infinite righteousness is utterly beyond his power to reach. Hence, all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

In addition to these words, there are more than a hundred others in the Bible that describe various kinds and degrees of sin. These range all the way from a simple omission of a minor duty to a major aggressive act, such as cursing God or murdering a man. They both fall under the category of sin, which God will not overlook nor fail to bring into judgment. No wonder the Scriptures say there is not one that doeth good and sonnet not: no not one.

The word “sin” is used almost eight hundred times in the King James Version of the Bible. Thus, sin is a very important subject in the Word of God.

Let us now address ourselves to the kinds and the degrees of sins and their resulting penalties:

First, we shall consider the subject of sinning ignorantly in unbelief. Some preachers have tried to over-simplify this question by asserting that sin is sin, and we should not try to make a distinction between big sins and little sins. But this position will not stand up in the light of Bible usage.

At Luke 23:34, we find Jesus praying that the Father forgive those who were responsible for His being on the cross, saying that they knew not what they had done. Jesus evidently would not have uttered such a prayer if He had known there was no

possibility for the prayer to be answered. Again at I Timothy 1:13, Paul says he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an overbearing one toward the saints of God, but he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. So we see that one may commit great sins, indeed, and yet receive mercy and salvation if he does the sin ignorantly in unbelief.

It seems clear from these situations that sinning ignorantly in unbelief is done by unsaved people. However, it is possible that saved people who live in the wrong religious environment might come under this classification. That is, one might be saved, but because he is under the wrong religious influence, he might live in an unscriptural church for a long time simply because he did not know any better. If such a one should come to the knowledge of the truth and embrace the truth about the church, then it is suggested he would receive forgiveness and would be readily received into the church in the eyes of the Lord. I suggest that this is what happened in the case of many of the three thousand who came into the Jerusalem church on the day of Pentecost. If anyone objects to this suggestion, let him answer the question of whether Zacharias and Elizabeth were saved before John was born, or whether they were saved when John came into the wilderness of Judea preaching that all the people should repent. Many saved Jews needed to repent of Pharisaism when John the Baptist came preaching repentance in the wilderness. Paul says at Acts 13:24 that John preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

Second, we shall note the case of saved people who sin willfully, knowing the truth. This situation is presented at Hebrews 6:4-6. On the positive side, it is said those people had been enlightened, they had tasted the heavenly gift, they had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, they had tasted the good Word of God, and they had tasted the dynamic powers of the coming age.

On the negative side, it is said that if they fall away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. This passage evidently refers to Israel and their experiences in the wilderness. Whatever their individual conditions were, in type they all were the delivered, baptized, and committed people of God. And, we must deal with them in type. I Corinthians 10:1-10 says that most of them were overthrown and died in the wilderness. They did not lose their salvation, but they did lose many blessings in the present life which they would have received if they had not sinned willfully against God and against

Moses. In their case, they were not permitted to go into and partake of the good land flowing with milk and honey. The proof that they did not go to Hell is the fact that Moses died in the same wilderness for the same kind of sins which caused the others to die. And yet, about fifteen hundred years later, he appeared in a glorified body on the Mount of the Transfiguration with Jesus and Elijah (Luke 9:30, 31). If Moses died in the wilderness for sinning willfully and did not go to Hell for it, neither did those others.

Sinning willfully is mentioned specifically at Hebrews 10:26-29. Again, reference is made to Israel going against the commandments that were given through Moses. Those who sinned died without mercy under the testimony of two or three witnesses. Again we call attention to I Corinthians, the tenth chapter, where it is said that many thousands died in the wilderness until only two men of the multitude who came out of Egypt actually entered into the promised land. Let it be stated again that they did not fall from grace, but they lost many blessings in this world and much reward in the world to come. If we fell from grace every time we sin and come short of the glory of God, why would there be any reward in Heaven?

Probably the most notable example of saved people sinning willfully in the New Testament is the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). There is no indication these two were not legitimate church members before the incident of lying to the Holy Spirit. They were killed for the willful sin which they committed, because there is no sacrifice or forgiveness for such a sin. They went to Heaven, but they were denied any further opportunity of service and blessing in the present life. The same argument that was made in the case of Moses applies in the case of Ananias and Sapphira.

This subject is brought up again at I John 5:16, 17, where the willful sin is called a sin unto death. In effect, John says there is no use to pray for the one who sins a sin unto death. There simply is no pardon in such a case. Lest there should be any misunderstanding, let it be stated again that a "willful sin" and a "sin unto death" seem to be of the same nature. They are committed by instructed people who are evidently saved. Their penalty is physical death; but, Moses stands as the notable example that such people who die for their sins do not lose their salvation.

I Corinthians 11:29, 30 speaks of perverting the Lord's supper, and it says some who did so there were weak and

sickly, and some had fallen asleep. In other words, some of them had died. Apparently, all people who willfully sin today do not immediately die. Instead, the convicting and guiding Spirit is withdrawn from them. This would be comparable to the removal of the candlestick from the Ephesian church mentioned at Revelation 2:5. The difference is that the one is an individual, and the other is a church. What is being suggested here is that when a saved person commits a sin unto death today, he is not necessarily stricken dead on the spot as were Ananias and Sapphira. On the other hand, he may go on living for a time, but the convicting and guiding Spirit is withdrawn from him. This may be true because we gradually allow sin to creep into the church and our personal lives until the Spirit is so crowded out that it does not work in the mighty power demonstrated at the Jerusalem church shortly after Pentecost. Let it be observed that the guiding cloud (Exodus 13:21, 22) went before Israel through all of their journeyings through the wilderness. The cloud was a type of the Holy Spirit's guidance of the church as it makes its journey through the world today.

Finally, let us consider the unpardonable sin. It is mentioned at Matthew 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28-30; and Luke 12:10. These scriptures were spoken by Jesus during the middle of His personal ministry. The religious leaders in Jerusalem had gradually become more set against him as time went by. Some of them followed him to Galilee, where He healed a demon-possessed man. They had to admit that He had cast out the demon, but they said He did it by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons. Jesus pointed out the utter inconsistency of Beelzebub using his power to cast out his own servants.

Then Jesus sounded the warning concerning the unpardonable sin, which He says is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He says in the Greek text of Mark 3:29: "Whosoever may blaspheme toward the Holy Spirit, does not have forgiveness throughout the age, but he is accountable for age long (or eternal) sinning."

The key factor here is one's denial of the truth when the Holy Spirit is mightily convicting him. The evident truth was that Jesus had cast the demon out of the man. The Holy Spirit was convicting them that it was the truth. Under this evidence and the convicting of the Spirit, the Pharisees denied the apparent truth. In so doing, they denied the evidence and the conviction of the Spirit and committed the one unpardonable sin. At Mark

3:22, it is clearly indicated that the scribes admitted Jesus had cast out the demon, so it was not a case of their believing it was a sham healing, but a question of the power by which he had done it.

Probably Judas Iscariot is the most outstanding example of one who committed the unpardonable sin. There is always someone to assert that the Bible says Judas was a devil from the beginning; but, so far, no one has pointed out the place where such a thing is said. The account is given at John 13:21-27. At verse 21, Jesus said one of the twelve should betray Him. Verse 26 says Jesus dipped the sop and gave it to Judas. Verse 27 says that after the sop Satan entered into Judas. He was never a saved man, so Satan's entering into him signifies more than merely his being unsaved. Satan had dominated him all of his life, just as he does any other unsaved person. At the point of his receiving the sop, however, he went beyond the point of no return. He had willfully and knowingly committed the act of which Jesus had just warned him — he had committed the unpardonable sin. The effect was so overwhelming that it did not drive Judas to conviction and salvation, but to suicide. Matthew 27:3 says Judas "repented", but in the Greek text it is simply indicated that he changed his mind and course of action when he saw what the terrible result was to be. Matthew 27:5 says Judas hanged himself after he had brought the betrayal price and cast it down in the temple.

Perhaps the most outstanding Old Testament example of an unpardonable sin is the case of Pharaoh. At Exodus 5:1, Moses and Aaron were sent by the Lord to demand that Pharaoh allow Israel to go out of Egypt. At verse 2, Pharaoh says he will not let Israel go. At Exodus 7:3, the Lord says he will harden the heart of Pharaoh. At Exodus 10:28, Pharaoh finally drives Moses from his presence after all the plagues came upon Egypt, except the slaying of the firstborn in every Egyptian household. He said he would see the face of Moses no more. The final result of this controversy was the slaying of the firstborn and the destruction of the army of Egypt in the attempted crossing of the Red Sea. Somewhere along the way, Pharaoh reached the point where death was the only force that would stop him. Therefore God killed him as he pursued the people of God.



“What will be the nature of heavenly reward? Will there be reward for individuals outside of service in a New Testament church?”

Let us begin by giving several items of technical information.

First, the term “reward” is always used in the singular number in the Bible discussion of the subject. At least, that is the only way I have found it. I do not know of any special significance involved in this matter.

Second, in the New Testament, the same word translated “reward” is also translated “wages.” It is true there is another word which means a low specified amount of pay, but it is never translated “reward.”

Third, “reward” is used about twenty-five times in the New Testament. Often “pay” or “wages” is used instead of it, as at I Timothy 5:18. The same word is called “hire” at Matthew 20:8.

Fourth, salvation is a gift (Romans 6:23); whereas, reward is pay for work done (I Corinthians 3:14, 15). Failing to make this simple distinction is what leads the majority of the religious world to believe in salvation by works. That is, people are strongly inclined to regard salvation as pay, or reward, for the good works which they do. The Bible does not teach any such thing as this. Reward always comes to those who are already saved, and it is to be reckoned as something in addition to the gift of salvation which one has.

The Scriptures make out a clear case to the effect that faithful service brings blessedness now, and it brings reward in Heaven; see Matthew 5:10-12. The real meaning of Romans 8:12-16 is that, if we are saved and committed to scriptural service, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Thus, we have the present blessedness

of the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of salvation. In Heaven, we will have the reward of the manifestation of all of our good works forever. The blessing we receive now and the reward we shall receive in Heaven are of the same nature, but the reward is more enduring and more perfect than the blessing that is available to us now.

Now let us consider the nature of heavenly reward. At Matthew 19:28, Jesus tells those who had fully committed themselves in service to Him that in His Millennial reign they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. To a great degree, the heavenly condition begins in the Millennium for the glorified saints. We will have our glorified bodies, and our works in the present life will be recognized and made manifest. But we will be “judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” who will still be in the flesh. We will not be performing this particular office in the final Heaven ages, for Israel will then be in their glorified bodies, and they will not be under our rule. From these facts, one might be inclined to conclude that reward is for the Millennium, and not for the Heaven ages.

But Matthew 5:12 says our reward in Heaven is great. It is true that faithful church saints will have an exalted position in the Millennium, which will not continue in the Heaven ages; yet, nothing will ever change the fact of the faithful works accomplished in the present world, nor the result of those works in eternity. If we have brought souls to God in salvation or in service, we will walk in fellowship with those souls forever (I Thessalonians 2:19, 20). This fellowship will be our reward, which will never cease to be. Our position as church saints will also remain forever, though we will not be ruling over the tribes of Israel any more.

If we get off center on one side, we will come to the conclusion that the same distinctions that prevail in the world will prevail in Heaven. If we get off center on the other side, we will come out with the conclusion that all saints will be on an absolute level in Heaven, and all personal distinctions will be erased. Neither position is true. Matthew 16:27 says Christ will reward everyone according to his works, and this reward will remain into the eternal Heaven ages.

A very important part of this discussion has to do with whether there is any reward outside of membership in a New Testament church. Let us approach this subject in the following way: Men had been living in the world for thousands of years

before the church came into being. During this time men had been saved by grace through faith, just as we are today. But after they were saved, they had different rules of life from what we have during the church age. For instance, Adam lived in bondage to a cursed earth until he should die. This was intended to turn him to salvation, and to keep him humble before God.

All of Noah's children had the opportunity to be saved, but as to their lives in the world, some of them were blessed, and some of them were cursed.

Israel was by far the most prominent nation in the Old Testament, and the law of Moses was their rule of conduct in life. They were a special people to God; just as much so as the church is in the present age. The Old Testament pages are filled with the story of Israel and the covenant which God has with them. This fact makes it necessary to deal very carefully with such a subject as reward for faithful service.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews enumerates hundreds of Old Testament characters who accomplished great things and bore great testimony to God through faith. Luke 13:28-30 seems to indicate there will be great reward in the Millennium for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many others. We cannot safely say there is no reward apart from the New Testament church. Those in Old Testament times labored against odds which we do not have against us. Reward must be reckoned, not only on the end results, but also on the difficulties overcome in attaining those results. No, we cannot conclude that reward is confined to the New Testament church.

On the other hand, it appears that none but church members can receive a full reward for labors during the church age. If the Second Epistle of John is addressed to the church and church saints, then only church members can fulfill the requirements of verse eight.

For example, baptism is a work of righteousness (Matthew 3:15). If an individual fulfills this particular work of righteousness, then he must experience baptism at the hands of a scriptural church. He may have done many other good works, but if he is lacking in this one thing, he will fall short of a full reward. At Matthew 3:15, Jesus told John that baptism was fitting for him to fulfill all righteousness.

Carrying out of all the observances of the church is absolutely necessary to bear a full testimony of Christ. He devised the

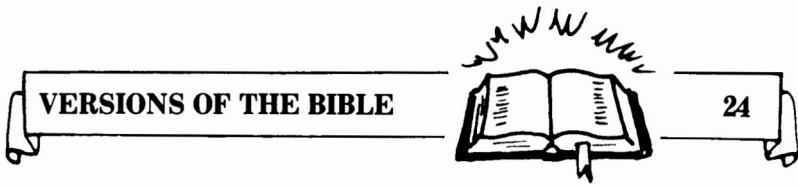
church plan himself, and Paul says that the church is the body and the fulness of Christ (Ephesians 1:23). If we omit any detail of the representation of Christ in our church activities, then we begin to misrepresent him. Thus we start on an endless career of perverting the gospel.

The church plan is the only one which will enable men to successfully bear a faithful testimony of Christ to the end of the world. Thus, there will be a special reward for faithful church saints: but, there will have been people who have served God diligently under other plans. Although their intentions and efforts may have been just as good as those put forth by the church, they did not accomplish equal results because they had a poorer plan of operation. This is why Israel failed under the law, and the church is succeeding under grace.

Every one shall be rewarded according as his works, but a greater reward is reserved for the church than for anyone else.

Judging the saved involves infinitely complicated factors and details. Let us be more concerned about our own faithful testimony than we are about the shortcomings of other people.

On the other hand, let us not forget it is the true church that is the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the body and fulness of Christ. There is glory in the church forever in Christ (Ephesians 3:21).



“What translations of the Scriptures do you recommend? Why? What is the difference between a ‘translation’ and a ‘paraphrase’ of the Bible? What helps do you recommend for a serious student of the Word?”

We are only a generation away from the time when a large percentage of the people thought the King James, or Authorized, Version of the Bible was the only Bible there was or ever had been. But, now, nearly everyone knows something of how the Bible has come down to us through very complicated processes. As we go into the questions stated at the head of this article, let us first consider the originals of the Scriptures.

Nearly all the Old Testament was written in the ancient Hebrew language. About half of the book of Daniel was written in the Aramaic language, which was a kindred tongue of the Hebrew. Of course, these Hebrew writings are by far the best source of study for the Old Testament scriptures. At the present time, however, very few people are familiar with the ancient Hebrew language, which went out of popular usage about the time of Christ. This fact makes most people dependent on a few scholars for what the original scriptures said.

The New Testament was written in the Greek language of the common people during the apostolic age. This type of Greek also passed out of common usage quickly so that only language scholars understand it any more. It is one of the most colorful and expressive languages the world has ever known. Therefore, the original New Testament was one of the most expressive writings ever produced. But today, ordinary people must have someone to tell them what the Greek says before they will know what the original New Testament teaches. Hence, there is the necessity and the great desirability to have

translations, paraphrases, and interpretations for the benefit of the people in general.

We need to make distinction among translations, interpretations, and paraphrases:

A “translation” is the bringing over the material out of one language into another. The goal is to make the text say as nearly as possible exactly in the new language what it said in the old one from which it was taken. The difficulty here is that it is not always possible to say in one language what has been said in another. In such a case, the translator must make it say in the new language approximately what it says in the old one as exactly as he can. This is why it is possible to have two translations of the same material which vary a great deal from one another. It is a difference of opinion as to what was meant in the first place, and then of just how to say it in the new language in the second place. There never will be an exact agreement on translations.

An “interpretation” is closely related to a translation, but yet it can be very different indeed. To illustrate this point, let us take the matter of the way of salvation. Some believe salvation is by grace, some believe it is by works, and some believe it is a combination of the two. Besides these complicating factors, there is the matter of the salvation of the “soul” — that is the new birth, and the salvation of the life — called growth in grace. The interpreter may switch these two, depending on what he already believes about the way of salvation. For the salvation of the life is by works, though the salvation of the spirit is totally by grace. Regardless of who interprets the Bible, his interpretation is greatly influenced by what he already believes.

A “paraphrase” of the Bible is not a word for word translation, but it is an attempt to restate in the commonly used phrases of the day what a translation says in more complex terms. Again, what one makes the Bible to say in a paraphrase is dependent upon what he already believes it teaches. A Baptist will make a Baptist Bible because he believes Baptist doctrine is what the Scriptures mean to teach. By the same token, the King James translation is a Church of England Bible so far as the translators could make it, and yet maintain a “show” of honesty and fairness.

At the present time, there is a strong trend in the direction of reducing the Bible to terms that can be readily comprehended by the casual reader. Thus, paraphrases of the

Scriptures are becoming very common. This may help the masses of people to a greater understanding of the Word, but it also will make them the victims of unscrupulous teachers who may wish to establish unscriptural doctrines and practices. One must look carefully to who and what are behind whichever new version of the Bible he reads.

There have been many translations of the Scriptures into English, made by many different individuals and groups. Each has had his own motives and viewpoints in making the translations. Most of these have not had very wide reception by the people. Some Baptists, even, have been tempted to do so in an effort to establish teachings that cannot be established by legitimate means.

The King James, or the Authorized, Version of the Scriptures has been the Bible of the people since its publication in the year 1611. One reason is that there was no generally accepted version in the English language up to that time. Another reason is that it is said to be the noblest and most beautiful writing in the English language. Some of its faults today are that many words used in it have passed out of usage or the meanings have changed. Another thing is that there was a definite effort made to make this version support the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, an offshoot of the Catholic Church. But we have simply been warned of these errors, and we have gone on and lived with them. To most people, the King James Version is the Bible!

The Revised Version of the Bible was published in England in 1881-1885. It was the work of a council of English and American scholars. They had the benefit of much information that was not available when the King James Version was produced, and they were not limited to trying to verify the doctrines of any one denomination. This version was far more accurate than was the King James Version, but it was never widely received by the people. They had come to regard the King James Version as "THE" Bible.

The American Standard Version was published in 1901 by the American part of the council which compiled the Revised Version. Some have said it is the most accurate translation of the Bible in the English language. But it has not been widely received by the public.

The most recent notable translation of the Scriptures into English is the Revised Standard Version, published in America in 1952. So far as I know it is a very good translation in general.

But it has some notable deceptions. It makes the word “virgin” of Isaiah 7:14 to be “young woman;” whereas it calls the same Hebrew word “virgin” at Genesis 24:43. The translators were willing for Rebekah, the mother of Jacob, or Israel, to be a virgin, but they would not grant the same virtue to Mary, the mother of Jesus. They did this despite the fact that the Greek forced them to call Mary “virgin” at Matthew 1:23. Inspiration should have forced them to call her the same thing at Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23, for the one is a quotation of the other.

Also, the Revised Standard Version consistently says “baptized with water,” when there is no such expression in the Greek New Testament. They did this, of course, to give countenance to sprinkling for baptism. To be consistent they should have had John baptizing Jesus “with” the River Jordan at Matthew 3:6 and Mark 1:5, 9. Also, at I Corinthians 10:2, they should have had the Israelites baptized unto Moses “with” the cloud and “with” the sea. Probably, what we should do is to warn our people of such deceptions as these and adopt this version as the best we can get. That is how we have lived with the King James Version these many years.

As to modern paraphrases, all the average reader can do is to seek the counsel of more experienced Bible students. I saw one such paraphrase in the past day or so which was strongly suggesting the idea of creation by the process of evolution. We must know what a man is religiously before we will know how to approach what he has written, or translated, on subjects of religion.

As to commentaries, their authors fill many volumes with the things everyone knows already. Generally, they are as silent as the grave on the things Bible students would like to know. I never owned a set of the popular commentaries, and I do not think I have missed very much.

It is admitted that the things said here leave us with dismal prospects for the future of Bible study. The convention brethren have their universities and a few outstanding Bible scholars, but it appears they are being overwhelmed with modernistic infidelity.

Presently, we have sufficient scholarship in the Bible languages to make a Baptist translation of the Scriptures that would be acceptable to believers in the fundamental truth of the original Scriptures. But I fear there is too much distrust, jealousy, and rivalry among us for us to accomplish such a work.

**JESUS CHRIST,
COMING BY WATER AND BLOOD**



25

“What does I John 5:6-8 mean when it says Jesus Christ came by water and blood?”

Almost any text of Scripture is best understood when studied in the light of its context. In fact, many texts cannot be rightly estimated at all apart from their immediate and more remote settings. Since this is true of the text for present consideration, we shall first note some background material.

John begins the epistle by saying it has to do with what he and the other apostles had seen, had heard, and their hands had explored concerning the Word of life. He reports these things to later disciples in order that we might have fellowship with those who actually saw and heard Jesus. Then we all would have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and we all would experience the joy that is in that fellowship.

John summarizes his purpose at I John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you in order that you may be aware that you have eternal life, who believe in the name of the Son of God.” (Greek text).

There are two titles ascribed to Jesus which should be emphasized. First, he is called the Word of life at I John 1:1. This is the same title which he is given in the first chapter of the gospel of John. It refers to the exhibition of the eternal God of Spirit in physical form, that He may be partially comprehended by mortal man. In other words, the apostles saw the infinite God exhibited in Jesus of Nazareth.

The other title ascribed to Jesus is “Son of God.” There are different words that express various father-and-child relationships. Some of these are the born child, the child in training, the child in the position of a servant, and the child who is in line for an inheritance from his father. The title, “Son of God,” refers to Jesus as a mature son, who' is in full agreement with his Father in all things.

In the first epistle of John, Jesus is represented as the Son of God, who is in full agreement with God in all things. He does the exact will of God in all things, and in Him men may see the will and reactions of God toward mankind in all situations that affect the human race.

The harmony that exists between the Father and the Son seem to be the greatest source of joy between them. By being saved, and then coming into the knowledge of the works, character, and goals of the Son of God, we become partakers of the heavenly joy of the fellowship that exists between the Father and the Son.

Now let us turn our attention to the passage mentioned at the beginning of this article — I John 5:6-8. Most of verse seven and a part of verse eight are left out of the later editions of the Bible as not being a part of the original text. The passage will be given as it appears in the latest revised Greek texts:

(Verse 6) “This one is the one coming through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood. And the Spirit is the one bearing witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

(Verse 7) “Because three are the ones bearing witness. . .

(Verse 8) “. . . the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are unto the one (testimony.)”

There were many high points and climaxes involved in the experiences of Jesus on earth. Some of these would be His birth, His circumcision, discussing the Scriptures when He was twelve years of age, beginning of His public ministry, every miracle which He performed, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and His ascension into Heaven — just to mention a few. However, there were two occasions on which God spoke His approval from Heaven on Jesus. One of these was immediately after the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:17), when God proclaimed Jesus as His Son. The other occasion was about three days before the crucifixion, when Jesus was making His final commitment to go to the cross (John 12:28). He prayed to the Father to go through with what the two of them had covenanted to do. The Father answered in substance that He would go through with it, thus giving the Son encouragement to go on to the cross. This is much like Abraham and Isaac’s

going to Mt. Moriah for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:8). Each of them had to commit himself fully and finally to his part in the sacrifice before the two of them could have the joyous and triumphant journey back home after the sacrifice was over. Both God the Father and the Son had to go through with His part in the sacrifice at Calvary before they could enter into the joy and the glory that was theirs in the homecoming of the Son after His resurrection from the dead (Hebrews 12:2).

John wrote the epistle in order that other saints might have the fellowship of knowledge that exists between the Father and the Son, and in this fellowship we might have fulness of joy (I John 1:4). Also, we may have the full assurance of our salvation in the testimony of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to come both through the water and the blood before He could have the experience of Hebrews 12:2.

Jesus' coming through water was His coming through the water of baptism. The Greek text does not say he came "by" water. It says he came "through" water and "in" the water. Immediately after the baptism of Jesus, there were three spectacular responses:

- (1) The Holy Spirit came down from Heaven and abode on Him.
- (2) God spoke from Heaven, proclaiming Him as His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased (Matthew 3:16, 17).
- (3) The Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be subjected to the three fundamental temptations of mankind (Matthew 4:1-11). These temptations are . . . the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the (showing off of spiritual power in material ways). . ." I John 2:16.

The logic is that in His baptism Jesus committed Himself in the sight of the intelligence of the universe to do all that God had sent Him to do. The response was that the Spirit came to abide with Him without any reservations (John 3:34). God proclaimed Him as His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. This was before Jesus had done any of His public works, but it was immediately after He had committed Himself to do them in His baptism. The third response to the baptism of Jesus was that the Devil hurled at Him the fundamental temptations under circumstances in which Satan would be most

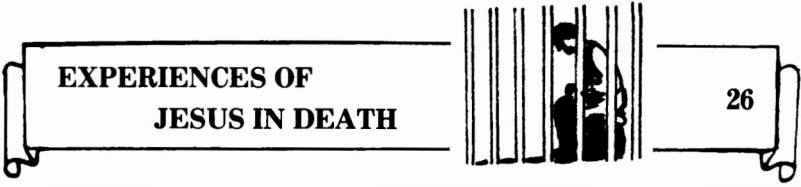
apt to succeed: Jesus was hungry; He had no political standing; and He was a man claiming to be the Son of God without performing spectacular feats so that fleshly men could see the proof.

Jesus fully committed Himself to His task in His baptism. This was His coming through the water. The Spirit and the Father gave their full approval and support. The Devil tried his utmost to make Jesus fail before he got started on his public ministry. Jesus succeeded and the Devil failed. Though Jesus yet had a terrible road ahead of Him, His final victory began to be foreshadowed in the wilderness temptations.

Coming through the blood is Jesus' coming through the blood of the cross. As the Son of man, Jesus was trapped in a world where sin and death reign everywhere. It is appointed unto man once to die, and death was the only way for Jesus to accomplish His commitment. In Gethsemane, as Jesus contemplated death, He sweat as great drops of blood (Luke 22:44). When He was dead on the cross, the soldier pierced His side, and there came forth blood and water (John 19:34), indicating by the disintegration of the blood that he was surely dead.

Though the blood of Jesus was shed on the cross, His body was sealed in the tomb, and all the might of the army of Rome tried to keep the tomb inviolate, the tomb was burst open, the soldiers were stricken down, the grave clothes fell off, and Jesus came forth alive. Let Revelation 1:17, 18 tell it: “. . . I am the one living, and I became dead, and behold I am living into the ages of the ages, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”

Yes, Jesus committed Himself to do all the will of God in His baptism. God's will required Him to travel the road of the cross; He did it, although it was horrible beyond expression!



**EXPERIENCES OF
JESUS IN DEATH**

26

“In what sense did the soul of Jesus go to Hell? What happened from the time Jesus died until His resurrection?”

Some have denied that the soul of Jesus actually went into Hell. They want to have it that the price for the sins of mankind was all paid on the cross. The fact seems to be that if man must go to Hell and suffer forever for sin, then anyone who pays the price in his stead must go into the infinite realm of death and there suffer without any bounds or limitations whatsoever.

Both Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:31 seem to imply that the soul of Jesus would have to be in Hell before it could be forsaken there. Thus, we cannot reasonably escape the conclusion that the soul of Jesus did go into the place that is translated “Hell” in these places.

Hell is a badly confused issue in Bible usage because the words most commonly translated “Hell”, refer to the realm of death before the final Hell begins. *Sheol* in the Old Testament, is translated “grave” thirty-one times, “Hell” thirty-one times, and “pit” three times. *Sheol* is simply “the unseen realm of the spirit, or soul, in death.” *Hades* is used about ten times in the New Testament. It means the same as *Sheol*, and it is rendered “Hell.” *Gehenna* means “the Valley of Hinnom,” but its application is to the place of perpetual burning. It is used about ten times in the New Testament. *Tartarus* is used one time, and it refers to the place of punishment. “The lake of fire,” and “the second death,” are used about five times in Revelation. They are the terms that refer specifically to the place of eternal torment where the unsaved will go after the white throne judgment.

Now let us address ourselves to the subject of Jesus’ putting Himself in the place of mankind in order to save men. Matthew 1:23 says He was born of a virgin. He would have the human nature of mankind, but the divine nature of God.

Hebrews 2:14 says in substance that as the children are sharers of flesh and blood, Christ also in a neighborly manner partook of them in order that through death He might destroy the Devil, who has the might of death, and that He might deliver those who all their lifetime were held in bondage to the fear of death. Old Testament saints were held in bondage to the fear of death because at that time they would go into the Devil's prison house. It appears that, if Jesus went into the realm of death, he would do something lethal to the Devil; see John 12:31.

John 1:14 says the Word became flesh and had a temporary dwelling among us. He says that in Him we beheld His glory as of an only begotten one of the Father, and that He was full of grace and truth. To God He was the perfect man, and in Him man could see all the infinite virtues of God.

Matthew 27:26 tells us that the Jews preferred a criminal above Jesus. This was because He refused to agree with their unrighteous religious ways. I Peter 3:18-21 says it was a righteous one dying on behalf of unrighteous ones, in order that He might bring us forward to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but the spirit was released, and in it He went and preached to the spirits who were in the Devil's prison house. In the spirit He went to where these men were in death. This must have been a great day for the Old Testament patriarchs.

The Catholics have it that Jesus died on Friday, and that He rose again on Sunday morning. According to this reckoning, two nights and one day is the most that Jesus could have spent in the realm of death. But he says at Matthew 12:40 that the Son of man should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The grave is not the heart of the earth; it is a mere scratch in the surface of the earth. The heart of the earth was conceived by the ancients as the place where the spirits of dead people went to await the resurrection. Therefore, Jesus in consciousness went into a place where there were conscious spirits such as Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man in the sixteenth chapter of Luke. He remained there three days and three nights, because three days is typically the full journey of mankind into the region of death.

About three days before the crucifixion, Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). The world was judged in the cross and the Devil was cast out of Heaven as the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).

Let us try to enumerate the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Scriptures record them, placing each item in its proper setting of time and sequence:

(1) Jesus died upon the cross, as dead as ever a man was. His body was taken down and was placed in the tomb, and it lay there for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40).*

(2) Like any other dead one, the spirit of Jesus went into the region of death when He died (Ephesians 4:9). He was conscious there, even as Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man, (Luke 16:24).

(3) In His released spirit, He went and preached to the spirits in the prison house of death, (I Peter 3:18, 19). Whether there was a more vital message for one group of spirits than for another, I do not know. I see no reason why all of the dead should not have been aware that Jesus had come into the realm of death, and why He had come there.

The Devil had the keys and the might of death (Hebrews 2:14). He held them legitimately because Adam had made him the god of the world (Genesis 3:6; II Corinthians 4:4).

(4) Matthew 12:29 seems to refer in the guise of a parable to Jesus' entering into the Devil's house of death. He binds the Devil and tears up his house of death. He takes the keys of death (Revelation 1:18). He delivers the saved, who have been in the prison house of death (Hebrews 2:14, 15). He ascends up to Heaven leading the captivity whom he has brought out of the region of death (Ephesians 4:9). Then, deposits these in Heaven, as described at Revelation 6:9-11. All saved spirits go there now to await the resurrection.

(5) A firstfruits-of-the-body resurrection took place immediately after the resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 27:51-53). Apparently, these went into Heaven as a guarantee that the rest of us will be raised. In addition to these, we have evidence that Enoch, Moses, and Elijah are already in Heaven in bodily

* No effort is made to deal with the subject of when Jesus went into Heaven and presented His blood there, see John 20:17.


form. Let it be noted that an entire sheaf of grain was used to carry out the firstfruits offering; see Leviticus 23:10-14.

(6) About two days before the crucifixion, Jesus said “. . . now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31). He was speaking of something that should be accomplished in His death. The Devil was not cast out of the earth at that time, but he was cast out of Heaven as the constant accuser of the brethren of Jesus, as he had been since the fall of man. Today, in Heaven there is the glorified man, Jesus Christ, with a token number of saved people in glorified bodies, and there are the spirits of all the saved. There just is not any place for the Devil to go into Heaven and accuse the brethren of Jesus.

(7) Let everyone understand for certain that the battle was over for Jesus when His spirit came victorious out of the prison house of death, and it was reunited with His glorified body. Ultimately, He ascended in power, glory, and complete victory into Heaven. There He was enthroned exactly where Lucifer said he would set his throne (Isaiah 14:13). Peter said at Acts 2:33 that Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. There we see Him asking and receiving anything He might wish from the Father.

The Father and the Son are merely biding the time until their purpose shall be accomplished on earth. Then we all shall go on to be forever with the Lord, for the road has already been opened every step of the way.

**THOSE WHO AROSE AFTER THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS**



“What is the significance of the resurrection of the saints who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus? Were they raised back to natural life, or did they come into the glorified state? If they were raised to natural life what became of them? Did they die again? If they were in the glorified state did they ascend into Heaven?”

Let us begin this discussion with some general observations.

First, the subject of those who came out of the graves after the resurrection of Jesus has been partly discussed in the previous article, which deals with the experiences of Jesus in death.

Second, though the Scriptures do not specifically tell us so, it seems we cannot place all of those who were raised from death in Bible times in the same category. Some were brought back to natural life, and others were glorified, or passed over into the heavenly condition.

Third, many times we do not have a “thus saith the Lord” for the things we would like to know. We must come to the best conclusion we can from what the Scriptures say and do not say on a given subject. The latter is mainly how we will deal with the subject discussed here.

Let us note the following translation of Matthew 27: 52, 53 from the Greek text: “And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the sleeping holy ones were raised up; And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered into the holy city and were manifested to many.”

If anything is said directly about these people anywhere else in the Bible I do not know of it. So, we make out the best case we may from what the Scriptures do say.

Elijah raised a boy from death (I Kings 17), and Elisha raised a boy from death (II Kings 4). The implications in both these instances were that they were simply raised back to natural life. Evidently, both of them died a second time in due course of time.

Jesus raised Lazarus from death (John 11). Some time later, Lazarus was present with Jesus at a supper in Bethany (John 12:2). It appears beyond a doubt that Lazarus was raised back to natural life. If so, he, too, died a second time later. I believe this was also the case with several others who were raised from death during the apostolic age.

On the other hand, in Old Testament times, Enoch was translated so that he should not see death (Hebrews 11:5). He was carried to Heaven in a glorified body. Also, Elijah went to Heaven in a bodily form. It had to be a glorified body because a natural body could not make such a trip (II Kings 2:11). So, we have both Enoch and Elijah in Heaven in glorified bodies in Old Testament times.

Some time before the transfiguration scene, Michael, the archangel, came down and contended with the Devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9). Michael won the argument and carried the glorified body of Moses to Heaven. This was so that Elijah and Moses “might have something to wear” when they stood together with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. After the transfiguration scene, Moses and Elijah went back to Heaven in their glorified bodies, and Jesus returned to the natural condition of His body. This is the only intimation there is in all the Bible that a glorified body ever became “unglorified” and returned to the natural estate. The transfiguration story is told in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew. It happened that way because the work of Jesus in the flesh was not finished.

The sum of what we have set forth is this: “It is appointed unto men once to die. . .” (Hebrews 9:27), but a number of people in Bible times died, were brought back to natural life, and then died a second time. There was a specific purpose in every one of these cases. On the other hand, Enoch and Elijah left this world without dying at all, their bodies changed into the glorified state without going through the process of death and resurrection. It may be said again that this was done in order to set forth certain truths in the Bible story.

Though Christ is called the firstfruits of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:23), both Enoch and Elijah were brought into the glorified condition before Jesus was raised from death. Also, Moses died, but he was evidently glorified before Jesus became the firstfruits of the resurrection. This is on the same principle that people were saved clear back to Adam, before the dying of Jesus on the cross. Sometimes the time sequence does not mean anything in the Bible economy of things.

Now let us note the Bible order of the resurrections:

(1) Christ is called the firstfruits of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:23).

(2) Those who belong to Christ at His coming for the saved will be in the second step, or stage, of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:23). I believe this group will include all of the dead saved, all of the living saved, all babies and little children, and all mental incompetents (I Thessalonians 4:17).

(3) Next, in chronological order is the great host who will be saved during the Millennium. More information about this topic is included in the essay, "The Conditions of Life in the Millennium," where it is suggested that Isaiah 65:20 may teach that these will be translated after a period of one hundred years. In other words, the translation of the saved will be a progressive thing that will continue throughout the thousand years of the Millennium. This will take care of the glorification of all the saved, for there will not be any more saved after the end of the Millennium.

(4) At the end of the thousand years, men will forever cease to be born, live in the flesh, and die as we do now. There will be the white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 in which all unsaved will stand before God and be forever condemned. In the meantime, all the unsaved dead will be raised in indestructible bodies (I Corinthians 15:22). All the living unsaved will be changed into a permanent form of existence, but sin will continue to plague them forever; note again the passage from Revelation 20.

In the foregoing enumeration, we have deliberately omitted the group described at Matthew 27:52, 53. I believe they are a firstfruits of the first resurrection. Jesus is called the firstfruits

of this resurrection, and truly He is. For in His power, virtue, and works inheres all resurrection power and authority. But in the firstfruits offering of Leviticus 23:10, 11, it was not an ear or a stalk of grain that was offered, but an entire sheaf, or bundle as we would call it. This would seem to imply more were involved than the one man, Jesus.

When we view this philosophically, it would seem to be this: It was no marvel that God raised Jesus up from death, for there had been no cause of death in Him to begin with. Justice demanded that God raise Him up. But all the rest of us deserve death. And if we died and stayed dead, we would be getting just what we deserve from the standpoint of our own works and merits. In the resurrection of those who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus, we have proof that all others who trust him will be raised also. I believe that David, by revelation, saw these things as is stated in Psalm 16:9, 10. Thus, the firstfruits offering depicted not simply the author of resurrection life, but also those who are made identical to him in the new birth and in resurrection power and virtue. The intimate identification of the saved with Christ in full salvation is one of the most unbelievably glorious doctrines of the Bible. Let it be stated bluntly, once for all, I believe there are in Heaven today, in glorified bodies Jesus, Enoch, Moses, Elijah, and the saints of Matthew 27:52, 53, as a firstfruits of the resurrection.

To my mind, a more difficult question is just who were these who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus? And, why was it they instead of some other group of saints that might be mentioned? The only clue I know is contained at I Peter 3:19, 20. These verses speak of some imprisoned spirits who were at one time disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparation. I am merely suggesting they were some saved people who refused the testimony that the flood was coming, and they died in the flood as the judgment for their unbelief. We have relied too much on the fallacy that, if a person is saved, he will do the will of God. The Bible is full of evidence to the contrary.

They suffered the terrible judgment of the flood as the penalty for their blatant rejection of the warning of Noah. But they remained saved despite all of this. And their resurrection in glory after the resurrection of Jesus stands as monumental proof that people do not fall from grace, though they have to be

severely judged and chastised for unbelief and disobedience. This is one of the examples of “those who sin willfully after they receive the knowledge of the truth” (Hebrews 10:26).

I believe the holy city of Matthew 27:53 is Jerusalem, then the capital of the religious world. These risen saints appeared there, then went into Heaven as a part of the firstfruits of the resurrection. For further study about the firstfruits offering, read Leviticus 23:10, 11.

THE GENDER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



“Is the Holy Spirit masculine? Is it important?”

During the past twenty years or so, I have heard many preachers speak with much authority to the effect that it borders on blasphemy to refer to the Holy Spirit as “it”. They insist that we must refer to the Spirit as “he”, or we identify ourselves as being gross ignoramuses. The majority of these have no remote idea of what is involved in this issue. The purpose of this article is to attempt to set the record straight on a few points.

First of all, in the English language, gender is based almost entirely on the idea of sex, or the absence of sex, That is, male beings are masculine gender, female beings are feminine gender, things without sex are neuter gender (“neuter” meaning “neither”), and collective nouns such as “people” and “birds” are said to be common gender because they involve individuals of both the male and female sexes.

Both Bible languages are radically different from this. The Hebrew language has only masculine and feminine genders. Male beings are generally masculine gender, and female beings are generally feminine gender. But the many things that are without sex are equally apt to be either masculine or feminine gender. It does not depend on sex, or the absence of sex, but it depends on construction of the name itself. For instance, earth is feminine, water is masculine, tree is masculine, life is feminine, death is masculine, and so on endlessly. There does not appear to be any pattern to the gender of sexless things in the Hebrew.

The Greek language has masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. As to the masculine and feminine genders, it is much like the Hebrew. But when we come to the many things without sex, they may be either masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, depending on the formation of the word. Light is neuter,

darkness is feminine, world is masculine, earth is feminine, Heaven is masculine, and water is neuter, just to enumerate a few of the many that might be mentioned. Again, there does not seem to be any clear pattern in this matter whereby these words have the genders which they do.

The point in all that has been presented is to prepare the would-be authorities for some shocking news. In the Hebrew language, the word *ruach*, “spirit,” is feminine gender in form. In usage, it is used both as masculine and feminine genders. For instance, Spirit is feminine gender at Genesis 1:2, where the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; but Spirit is masculine at Genesis 6:3, where the Spirit of Jehovah will not always strive with evil men. And it goes this way through the Old Testament — sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine. I have not found any pattern to govern this variation in usage although this word is used about two hundred fifty times in the Old Testament. It is variously translated as “breath,” “wind,” “mind,” “spirit,” etc. In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, *ruach* is used ten times. It is translated “spirit” two times, “breath” five times, and “wind” three times.

In the New Testament Greek, *pneuma*, “spirit,” is used almost five hundred times. It is mostly translated “Spirit,” referring to the Holy Spirit, or “spirit,” referring to other spirits — good or evil. The word is translated “wind” at John 3:8; otherwise, it is rendered either “Spirit” or “spirit” in this passage. Now here is the shocker. *Pneuma*, “spirit,” is always neuter gender in the Greek New Testament! The word is simply made that way. The pronouns referring to *pneuma* are nearly always in the neuter gender. Neuter pronouns are usually rendered “it” as opposed to “he” — the way our brethren tell us we must do it.

The only exceptions I know of to the above rule are at John 14:16, 17, 26; and John 16:7-14. In these verses, the King James Version uses twenty-two pronouns in reference to the Holy Spirit. Twenty-one of these are masculine, and one is neuter. In the same passages the Greek text uses ten pronouns, of which five are masculine and five are neuter. The reason for this is that the five neuters have *pneuma*, “spirit,” for their antecedents, and the five masculines have *parakletos*, “comforter,” for their antecedents. *Parakletos* is a masculine word, though it refers to the same person that *pneuma* refers to. The pronouns simply take the same gender as their antecedents, and they have little or nothing to do with the

gender or sex of the Holy Spirit. The reason for the great discrepancy in numbers between the two texts is that the King James Version uses pronoun subjects for verbs, whereas the Greek text has the subjects built into the verbs themselves. The King James Version arbitrarily gives these pronouns masculine gender, though there is no authority for it in the Greek text. They should be neuter where the antecedent is clearly *pneuma*, “spirit,” and they should be masculine where the antecedent is clearly *parakletos*, “comforter.”

Why are our brethren so eager to make a “He” of the Holy Spirit? Do they do it in order to give added “proof that the Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead? Is this necessary to prove there are three persons in the Godhead? No, it is not at all necessary. There is sufficient evidence of the trinity of God without going to extremes to prove it. In the Great Commission at Matthew 28:19, the church is told to baptize its converts in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This one passage is all that is necessary to prove the trinity of God.

However, there is much other legitimate evidence available. Let us note a few items:

First, throughout the Old Testament Hebrew, the general and all-inclusive name for God, *Elohim*, being a masculine plural, is used with a singular verb, whereas a plural subject normally takes a plural verb. Though the Hebrew plural means two or more, it seems evident that the plural subject and the singular verb in this instance are used to indicate the trinity and the unity of the Godhead.

Second, Genesis 18:1 says Jehovah appeared to Abraham. The second verse then states that three men stood by Abraham. It appears evident that they were a manifestation of God. There were three of them each representing one person of the trinity. Later two of them apparently went to Sodom and the third stayed and communed with Abraham. It is suggested that the representatives of the Father and the Holy Spirit went to visit judgment on Sodom, while the representative of the Son remained to converse further with Abraham.

In the wilderness wanderings of Israel, the Father sat in judgment in Heaven, Moses represented the Son, and the pillar of cloud represented the Holy Spirit; see Exodus 13:21, 22.

The trinity was clearly manifested at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 4:16, 17). Jesus went up out of the water of baptism,

the Spirit came down from Heaven in a form that looked like a dove, and the Father proclaimed Jesus as His beloved Son.

Certainly, what is said about the Comforter at John 16:7, 8 is sufficient evidence of the personality of the Holy Spirit to convince any reasonable Bible-believing person. Why go on and obscure this evidence by injecting grammatical situations which simply are not true? I do not think it can be shown that the Greek New Testament ever speaks of the Holy Spirit as “he.”

One of the faults in present-day pulpit oratory is that the preacher with a show of great knowledge and ability buries his legitimate points beneath an avalanche of unessential details. In other words, if he ever tells the congregation what his sermon is about, he so wearies and bewilders them with small details that they have forgotten it before he is through.

Certainly, there is no intent on my part to question, or weaken, or cheapen the doctrine of the trinity of God. But, if our faith in the infallibility of the Scriptures, and our confidence in our own religious position are what they should be, then we will be willing to accept the Bible as it is. We will not be trying endlessly to change details of it from the way it is to the way we would like for it to be.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT



29

“What is the distinction between soul and spirit? Just what is the soul?”

Because of certain usages in the Bible, we have come to think of soul and spirit as referring to the same thing — in other words, that they are synonymous terms. This is far from being the truth. It is necessary to go to the original languages of the Bible to find the real meanings and usages of words used in the Scriptures.

Consider the Hebrew word, *nephesh*, translated “soul” in the Old Testament.

(1) *Nephesh* comes from a Hebrew verb which means “to breathe.” Hence, we may expect “soul” to be closely related to the idea of the breath of life.

(2) *Nephesh* is translated “soul” four hundred twenty-eight times, “life” one hundred nineteen times, and about thirty other ways about one hundred seventy-five times. These latter refer to intelligent or conscious life one way or another.

(3) *Nephesh* is translated “creature” six times in Genesis to denote the animal creation in general (Genesis 1:20, 21, 24). This includes both the sea and the land animals of the highest and the lowest orders.

(4) When *nephesh* is translated “life,” it almost uniformly refers to physical life as distinguished from spiritual life. Notable examples of this are contained at Genesis 9:4, 5.

(5) *Nephesh* is translated “soul” about one hundred twenty-five times in the Psalms. Here it refers almost uniformly to consciousness of spiritual things (Psalm 16:10). The soul of Jesus here went consciously into the realm of death even though his body was dead in Joseph’s new tomb at the time.

(6) In the Old Testament books, *nephesh*, or “soul,” generally refers to conscious life, either physical or spiritual in nature; see Numbers 21:4, 5; Psalm 19:7.

The sum of what we have found thus far is very well stated under the sixth point just given: “soul” refers to conscious life regardless of whether it is physical or spiritual life that is under consideration. One teacher pointed to Isaiah 10:18, which mentions the soul and body of a forest, to prove that a tree is a soul, or that it has a soul. This idea must be rejected because this scripture is couched in figurative language, and the real application is to the nation Israel in a time of judgment.

When we survey the New Testament Greek on the subject of “soul” we find about the same situation as that found in the Old Testament. The prevailing translations of *psuche* are “soul” and “life,” with “soul” being in the majority.

(1) The Greek word *psuche*, and “soul,” comes from a family of words which mean “to breathe,” “to blow,” “the wind,” etc. It is closely allied with the idea of breathing conscious life.

(2) *Psuche* is translated “soul” fifty-eight times in the King James Version of the New Testament. It is translated “life” forty times, and otherwise five times.

(3) When *psuche* is translated “life” it generally emphasizes physical life and consciousness of physical things. It stands in contrast to *zoe*, which refers generally to spiritual life and consciousness. John, who wrote predominantly about spiritual, eternal things, used *zoe* sixty times, whereas he used *psuche* only twelve times. *Psuche* translated “life” refers to animal life in the sea at Revelation 8:9.

(4) *Psuche* translated “soul” emphasizes the idea of consciousness of spiritual, eternal things. However, it refers to creatures in the sea at Revelation 16:3. It would have been far more consistent with their general practice for the King James translators to have rendered *psuche* as “life” in this verse.

Having devoted this study thus far to the technical details, we now turn to the issues raised at the beginning: “What is soul, and how may it be distinguished from spirit?” We shall enumerate first the kinds of life that are known in the universe.

(1) There is the kind of physical life which a tree has. It lives, grows, reproduces, and dies. It does not have the ability to move about, or to think, or to feel.

(2) There is the kind of physical life which animals in general have. Many of them live by eating the same kinds of food, drinking water, and breathing air as man does. They have the ability to love, to hate, to reproduce after their kind, and to follow the manner of life which the Creator has prescribed for them. But they have not the power of creative thinking. They do not rise above the habitat in which they were born. This puts an impassable gulf between them and mankind. Animals have only conscious, physical life. When they die, their spirits go downward to the earth (Ecclesiastes 3:21). Apparently, they go out of existence.

(3) Next, we mention angels, who are two-fold beings. Angels are described at Hebrews 1:14 as ministering (ceremonially serving) spirits, sent forth to do service for those who are to be heirs of salvation. They are spirit beings, and they have an order of intelligence which is far superior to that of mankind in his present estate. They live in the limitless reaches of infinity; whereas, man is confined to the limitations of time and space. Angels do not have material bodies as men do, though they often assumed the forms of men in Bible times. Let the interested reader study the thirteenth chapter of Judges on this point.

(4) Man is a three-fold being, or a trinity. He has physical life, mental or intellectual life, and spiritual life. An unsaved person is spiritually dead, but he still has spirit capacity. He is not in a condition of spiritual annihilation. Otherwise he could make no response whatever to the convicting Spirit of God. Man alone is created in the image and likeness of God. This means he has a spiritual kinship to God, and it means that in the resurrection man will have an eternal physical likeness to the way Jesus has been since He arose from the dead (I John 3:2).

Now let us get down to the matter of the relationship between “soul” and “spirit” as parts of the makeup of man. Hebrews 4:12 tells us it is hard to divide between soul and spirit — even as hard as dividing between the joints and

marrow of the bones of the body. At I Thessalonians 5:23 the soul is equated with the spirit and the body as the components of the human being. It has been previously intimated, if not plainly stated, that the soul is what makes us conscious of ourselves and of the world around us. When one loses the faculty of awareness he is sometimes referred to as being like a vegetable. This happens when the faculties that produce “soul” cease to function.

Though there are three components in the makeup of a human being, the seat of intelligence, feeling, awareness, emotions, etc. is in the mind. For a person to be aware of things pertaining to his body there must be a communicating between the mind and the body. When such is the case there is fleshly consciousness, or in the terms of our present discussion, one is in the state of being a “fleshly” soul. This is exactly the condition of the rich man at Luke 12:19. It is also the condition against which Paul warns the saints at Romans 8:12, 13. If saved people live after the flesh, they shall be separated forever from the things for which they lived at the time of death; see Luke 12:20.

On the other hand, when the spirit of a saved person is in communion with his mind, he is in the state of having a “spiritual” soul, or of being a spiritual soul. This is the thing that is brought out at Romans 8:13-16. Let us paraphrase these verses, with appropriate comments on what the Greek text actually says.

(Verse 13-b) “. . . but if ye through the Spirit put to death the practices of the body, ye shall live (in the spiritual realm now, and ye will have good works to carry on the Heaven with you).”

(Verse 14) For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, these are mature sons (not merely born children) of God. (The mature son of God is in harmony with his Father, and he seeks to please Him, motivated by love).

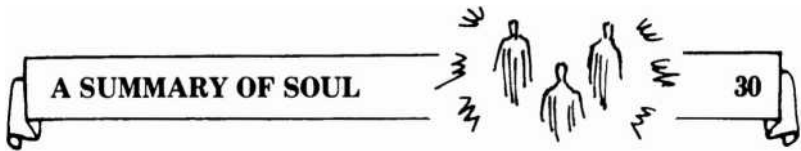
(Verse 15) For ye (in the church economy of things) did not receive the spirit of bond-service again to fear (the spirit that motivated Israel when they were under the law); but ye received the Spirit of mature sonship, in which (Spirit) we cry out Abba! Oh, Father! (Our Beloved Father!).

(Verse 16) (In the condition just described) The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the (born) children of God.

(And, thus, through this channel we have an assurance of salvation that others do not have.)

It is to be observed that when the saved individual allows his spirit to communicate with the mind, there is consciousness of spiritual things. This person is a spiritual person, and while he is in this condition he does not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Also, in this condition the Holy Spirit bears witness with his spirit that he is a born child of God (Romans 8:16), and he has the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of salvation. He is then what I have chosen to call a spiritual soul, for want of a better term. When the child of God living in this consciousness of his salvation, he will be rejoicing in it, and he will not be fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Attaining this goal is one of the great purposes set forth in the New Testament.

Let us attempt to summarize briefly: "Soul" is conscious life, ranging all the way from the physical consciousness of the lowest forms of animal life, to the highest exercise of consciousness of which man is capable. When the earthworm feels pain as it is pierced by a fishhook, it is an exercising of soul. When a man is rejoicing in the contemplation of heavenly things, it is also an exercising of soul. If anyone objects to associating the pain of an earthworm with the spiritual exercise of a man, let him remember that the same word is used in the Greek text of Revelation 16:4 to designate the fishes that is used at Matthew 26:38 to describe the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. They are both exercises of soul because they are exercises in consciousness of living beings.



“Do angels have souls? What is the difference between soul and spirit?”

From Colossians 1:19, 20, I believe all angels were created alike with reference to their “soul” condition. Being intelligent creatures, each one at a certain point in the ancient past chose his eternal destiny in Christ. As the result of this choice, the Bible presents the holy angels as doing the will of God exactly in every detail of the missions on which God sends them. Also as the results of this choice, the Bible presents the Angels of the Devil (Matthew 25:41), and it mentions the multitudes of demon spirits (called “devils” in the King James Version of the Bible), see Mark 5:9, 13. Let it be emphasized that there is only one Devil, but there are many thousands of demon spirits.

A brief study of soul:

The Hebrew word translated soul — *nephesh*, and the Greek word translated soul — *psuche*, both have to do with the idea of breathing life. Hence the primary application is to conscious life. These two words are used about seven hundred times in the Bible. They are translated “soul” about five hundred fifty times, and “life” about one hundred times, and otherwise about fifty times.

The emphasis is on the idea of conscious life as opposed to unconscious life. The fish in the sea are called soul at Revelation 16:3. The scope of soul ranges all the way from the lowest orders of animal, or conscious, physical life to the highest forms of man’s spiritual consciousness.

I Thessalonians 5:23 indicates there is a difference between soul and spirit. Hebrews 4:12 implies it is hard to discern between soul and spirit. However, there is a difference between the two.

Man is a trinity (threefold being) consisting of physical life, mental life, and spiritual life. But the mind, or brain, is the seat of consciousness. To be aware of physical things there must be a correspondence between the body and mind. To be aware of spiritual things there must be a correspondence between the spirit and the mind. It is this point of contact that seems to be designated as soul in the Bible.

It is the spirit, and not the soul, that is born from above, John 3:3, 5. We rather uniformly refer to the new birth as the salvation of the soul. The salvation of the soul at I Peter 1:9 seems to be what we will receive at the end of the way, which is at the resurrection. The salvation that puzzled the prophets, and which the angels had a strong desire to look into, is the salvation of the life, wherein we will tell the truth of God, though we are still liars by the nature of the flesh. It is that salvation in which we rejoice greatly, though we are sorely beset by the burdens of the flesh and sin cursed world, I Peter 1:12.

It is the spirit that is born from above. But it is the soul that makes us conscious of spiritual things, Romans 8:1, 16. Here the Holy Spirit projects the saved spirit into the field of consciousness, where there is generated the knowledge, joy, and hope of salvation.

When there is a correspondence between the flesh and the mind, there is a fleshly mind and a fleshly soul. Though the individual might be born from above, his spirit is dormant, he is unconscious of its existence, and he is in the utterly fleshly condition of Romans 8:5, and II Peter 1:9.

We err greatly in supposing the new birth is really the only vital issue in the New Testament. It is not so. The new thing in the New Testament is not the new birth. It is a new rule of life whereby we may live acceptably before God, though we do still sin and come short of his glory in the flesh. The seventh chapter of Romans tells how a man utterly failed in his life under the law. The eighth chapter of Romans tells how a man may succeed in his life under the plan of life which Jesus gave in the grace or church age. Our exercisings in life, whether they are exercisings of spirit or exercisings of flesh, are activities of soul. And they determine whether we embrace in life the benefits of the kingdom of God or not, the present benefits of the kingdom of God being spiritual as opposed to fleshly in their nature, Romans 14:17.

An animal has only a fleshly soul, for it has no spiritual capacity. It gets the same kind of physical satisfaction from eating that a man gets. But this is as far as the animal is capable of going in exercises of soul. The appeal of Romans 12:1, 2 to live in the realm of spiritual consciousness is an appeal strictly to saved people — and not to animals at all.

Animals are one-fold beings, having only physical life. (This does not deny that animals are capable of loving and of following a life pattern that is good for them). Man is a three-fold being, consisting of physical, intellectual, and spiritual life. Angels are two-fold beings, consisting of intellectual life and spiritual life. They are not bound by the limitations that bind the physical creation in the earth. They are creatures of infinity, and they could evidently see much of the results of their choice before the choice was made. Therefore their choice was final. There is no salvation for fallen angels. But there was salvation for Adam after he had fallen because of his poor ability to foresee what the future would hold. This latter statement is written with the vital awareness that I Timothy 2:14 says Adam was not deceived.

I take it these questions were raised with reference to whether there is, or ever has been, any salvation for fallen angels. Isaiah 14:12-15 tells about an angel of light who aspired to rise above his appointed station, and to set his throne exactly where Jesus was enthroned when he returned victorious to heaven after his sojourning on earth, Ephesians 4:10. This angel was cast out of heaven and landed in Hell.

Ezekiel 28:12-15, tells about an anointed covering Cherub who had been in the garden of God, and he was perfect in his ways until iniquity was found in him. He was cast down from the mountain of God. This has to be an angel and not literally the king of Tyre.

At Luke 10:18 Jesus says He saw Satan fall from Heaven as a lightning. This was to explain to the disciples why Jesus could command demon spirits.

Revelations 12:7-9 tells about the Devil and his angels being cast out of heaven into the earth as the result of a war in Heaven. I believe this war was when Jesus returned to Heaven after His sojourning on the earth.

To me it sums up to this: God was pleased for all fulness to dwell in Christ, Colossians 1:19. Angels were meant to take some virtue from Christ by their own choice and live forever in perfect holiness and harmony with God. I do not know what

this virtue was. Some made the right choice, and they are the holy angels, who serve God to perfection. The ones who refused are the Devil and his angels, who are the demon spirits. They are operating freely on the earth. The angels of II Peter 2:4, and Jude 6 are the angels of the intellectual and spiritual realms, who are chained in darkness awaiting the day of judgment and final condemnation. All angels made their choice once for all in the ancient past. Therefore there is no salvation for fallen angels now or any time in the future.

I do not find where angels are called souls, nor where they are said to have souls, in the Bible. It may be that “soul” is so intimately related to physical life that angels are excluded from the category.

KING SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR



31

“Did the witch really call up Samuel from death? If so, then what became of Samuel? Was Saul a saved man?”

Saul was the first king who ruled over Israel. Apparently, God gave him to them at their demand (I Samuel 8:5). Not only did he give them a king, he gave them the kind of king they demanded — a man who would be a great hero in war (I Samuel 9:2). Samuel anointed Saul to be king, which signifies the consent of God, though that consent seems to have been given reluctantly (I Samuel 10:1). The anointing denotes the placing of the Holy Spirit on the anointed one to enable him to do the work for which he is appointed.

From the time reckoning given by Ussher, Saul was anointed to be king about the year 1095 B.C. (I Samuel 10). It was only about two years later that he was rejected by the Lord as king. This rejection was because Saul assumed the office of the priesthood when Samuel did not appear as soon as Saul thought he should to perform this office (I Samuel 13:14). However, Saul continued to act as king for about thirty-eight years before his death.

About sixteen years later, 1079 B.C., Saul was rejected as king a second time (I Samuel 15:11, 26). This time it was because Saul did not kill Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and destroy all their wealth as the Lord had told him to do. This was to be a judgment for Amalek’s opposing Israel when they were in the wilderness (I Samuel 15:2, 3). It appears that the Lord withdrew himself completely from Saul after this second act of willful disobedience.

It does not appear, however, that David was anointed to be king in the stead of Saul until about another sixteen years had passed (I Samuel 16:13). It is possible that the anointing of David took place earlier than seems to be indicated. This would

give more time for David's playing to drive away the evil spirit from Saul (I Samuel 16:23). It would also give time for the incident of David's slaying Goliath with the sling and stone (I Samuel 17).

The net result seems to be that Saul continued to reign for about thirty-eight years after God withdrew His guiding Spirit from him. According to Ussher's time reckoning again, Saul was killed 1056 B.C., and David became king in Israel (I Samuel 31). The point emphasized here is that Saul was anointed (signifying the giving of the Spirit) to empower him to govern Israel aright when he became king (I Samuel 10:1). Later, the Spirit was withdrawn, leaving Saul to rule without any help from God for a long time; see I Samuel 28:5, 6.

Whether Saul was or was not a saved man is a very knotty problem. I believe he was, and that he is an example of those who sin willfully after they come to the full knowledge of the truth (Hebrews 10:26-29). He did not lose salvation, but he lost fellowship with God, and all help and guidance from God.

Now let us turn to the question of whether the witch really called up Samuel from death. We shall first enumerate several assertions that are made about the incident without any hint of sham or fraud being involved whatsoever. This account is given in I Samuel 28.

(1) Saul asked for Samuel, and the woman saw Samuel (vs. 11 and 12). For some reason, she also recognized Saul for the first time at this point.

(2) The woman said she saw a godlike figure coming up out of the earth (v. 13). She saw only one such figure. Saul did not see the figure.

(3) When the woman described what she saw, Saul knew that it was Samuel (v. 14). Saul fell down and worshipped, or did reverence to Samuel.

(4) Samuel rebuked Saul for disturbing his rest (v. 15). Saul answered that God had departed from him, and answered him not at all. Saul was desperate for Samuel to tell him what to do in his extremity.

(5) Samuel asked Saul why Saul should call on him since Jehovah had departed from him and had become his enemy. If

Jehovah would not help him, why expect a servant of Jehovah to help? (v. 16).

(6) Samuel said Jehovah had fulfilled what he had spoken by Samuel in tearing the kingdom from the hand of Saul and giving it to David (v. 17).

(7) In verses 19 and 20, Samuel is represented as telling Saul it was because of the disobedience of Saul that Jehovah had forsaken him. Both Israel and Saul should be delivered into the hands of the Philistines, and on the morrow Saul and his sons should be with Samuel (in the region of death).

(8) Verse 20 tells us in effect that the words of Samuel frightened Saul almost to death.

In all this encounter, the writer finds no hint that there was any deception, or misrepresentation in the encounter among Saul, the witch, and the spirit of Samuel. It was a spirit because Saul could not see Samuel. The woman be devil power could see Samuel, but Saul could not see him.

Let us note the principles whereby the agent of the devil, that is the witch of Endor, could call up the spirit of Samuel from the region of death. The body of Samuel had been in the grave during the whole transaction. It was only the disembodied spirit that was brought back from the realm of death.

Samuel died as all men do, and his spirit went into the prison house of death called *Sheol*, the unknown world. This *Sheol* is identical with the *Hades* of Luke 16:23. This passage in Luke is an Old Testament situation. There were two compartments in *Sheol*, or *Hades*, one for the saved, where Abraham and Lazarus were comforted, and one for the unsaved, where the rich man was in torment by anticipation of what was to come to him later.

The Devil held sway in *Sheol*, but under the strict limitations which God imposed upon him, see Isaiah 14:17, and Hebrews 2:14. This was because Jesus had not yet gone into the realm of death and delivered the spirits of the saved, as He later did (Revelation 1:18).

At Ephesians 4:8-10, we have Jesus going first into the heart of the earth, where *Sheol* was believed to be, and then He

ascended above all heights leading captive the spirits of the saved who had been imprisoned in death. Jesus took the spirits of the saved dead into Heaven, where they are represented as being beneath the altar in the very presence of God (Revelation 6:9-11). There they are eagerly awaiting the resurrection of their bodies.

God allowed the witch to bring up the spirit of Samuel to pronounce final judgment on Saul for his willful disobedience. I do not know why God used Samuel as his messenger rather than some angel or living man. Perhaps it was because Saul had refused all of God's previous warnings and admonitions of judgment. We are told at Hebrews 6:4-6, that it is impossible to renew some to repentance who have persisted in sin after much evidence to the contrary. Evidently, the spirit of Samuel went back into *Sheol* when the encounter was finished, where it remained until Jesus went there and took all the saved spirits away into Heaven. They are never to be touched by the Devil again, nor to be influenced by him in any way.



“Is miracle working a part of God’s kingdom administration today? If not, when and why were such gifts as miraculous healing taken from the church?”

In dealing with the subject stated above, the first thing we need to consider is what a miracle is. We shall try to keep our definitions within the bounds of the Scripture usage of the term.

One teacher has said that a miracle is the reversal of the law of sin and death, and the working of the law of righteousness and life in its stead. A good illustration of this definition is the raising of Lazarus from death as told at John 11:38-44. The working of the law of sin and death caused Lazarus to die and to remain dead so long as no other working power came into the situation. The working of the law of righteousness and life nullified death and caused life to prevail again in Lazarus.

Another way of saying almost the same thing is to say that a miracle is accomplished when Spirit power enters into the material realm and reverses the working of the perverted laws of the material creation. In the account of Jesus walking on the sea (Matthew 14:22-32; John 6:15-21), there are several examples of the working of supernatural power in the material creation to reverse natural law: Jesus walked upon the water; Peter walked upon the water so long as his faith held out; the storm ceased instantly; and the boat moved instantly to the shore without effort on the part of the men. These things were all done by Spirit power working in the physical creation.

We are emphatically taught at I Corinthians 13:8-10 that, when the Bible as the perfect, or completed, Word of God should come, all those spiritual gifts, which were only expedients to serve during the meantime, should be taken away. At I Corinthians 12:28-30, a list of about ten spiritual

gifts is recorded of those persons and things that were needed to get the church fully started on her career in the world. But when the church was fully launched and the Bible, the perfect Word of God, was finished, all these things should be taken away, and faith, hope and (Godly) love were to remain as the permanent spiritual gifts to the church throughout the church age.

In denying miracles today, we do not deny the existence of the God of Spirit (John 4:24) nor do we deny that there is a special ministry of the Holy Spirit in and to the church (John 14:16-18, 26; John 16:7-15). In this officework, the Holy Spirit takes the place of Jesus, who led the church in person while He was in the world. In this office, the Spirit convicts sinners (John 16:8), it convinces obedient saved people of their salvation (Romans 8:16), and it guides the committed and submissive church members into the way of all truth (John 16:13, 14). This latter is why there is one manner of church that is right in all fundamental doctrines and practices. All individuals and all churches make some mistakes as to details. But according to the promises of Jesus, some are to remain fundamentally and essentially true until the end of the church age, (Matthew 16:18; 28:20).

What is meant here is that there are some religious errors which are far more serious in their nature and results than are others. For example, some Baptist churches insist on using wine in the Lord's Supper, whereas others are equally insistent that grape juice must be used. The Scriptures only specify "the cup" and "the fruit of the vine". On the other hand, the Scriptures always specify immersion wherever the "mode" of baptism comes under discussion. Israel served God under the law economy, and we should serve him under the church economy. Salvation by grace prevails under both systems. Abandoning the doctrine of salvation by grace is a far more damaging sin than is choosing the wrong walk as saved people. This is not to say that it is acceptable to "join the wrong church."

It is repeated for emphasis that miracle working by the power of the Holy Spirit continued only until the time when the Bible, the perfect system of instruction, was completed. It was taken away at the end of the apostolic era. We must walk by faith, and not be the sight of miracles or anything else of a tangible nature (II Corinthians 5:7). The general purpose of

miracles was to demonstrate the presence and power of the God of spirit in the material creation. Let us note some specific examples of miracles in Old Testament times, and the purpose of each.

At Genesis 5:18-24, we have the account of the translation of Enoch. He was the seventh generation from Adam, and his translation prophesied that, at the end of this work, the saved will be translated out of the world and we will not be left to go through the great tribulation. Of course, the translation of Enoch was a personal reward to him for his having walked with God in very difficult times, but, generally, the import of a miracle is far greater than merely satisfying the needs of one individual.

At Exodus 14:15-31, we have the account of Israel crossing the Red Sea. They had been typically saved under the blood of the Passover lamb back in Egypt, but it required the typical baptism in the cloud and in the sea to finally separate them from the Egyptian bondage, and to finally commit them to go on the journey to the land of promise. In the miracle of the parted waters, Israel was finally separated from Egypt. But it is meant to teach us the typical lesson that in baptism we come out of the world of religious error into the church, where the Word and the Holy Spirit teach us how to fulfill Romans 12:1, 2 and II Peter 3:18, thus attaining to the salvation of the life.

When we examine the purpose of miracles in the New Testament, we find that likewise there were broad lessons which Jesus sought to teach. At John 2:1-11, we have the miracle of the turning of water into wine. Verse eleven indicates this miracle aided the belief of the disciples that Jesus was what He claimed to be. But it was meant to show to all the Jews that Jesus was the one who could and would deliver them from all their needs if they would receive Him as the promised Messiah.

In the fifth chapter of the gospel of John, there is the account of the afflicted man at the pool of Bethesda (House of Mercy). The man was helpless; he had been that way a long time and no one could or would do anything for him. He hoped for salvation in Jerusalem, but he did not know when. He pictured the Jewish people in political and economic bondage to Rome, and ensnared in false religion by his own people. Jesus healed him on the Sabbath to teach them that their nation would be healed when they should accept the Messiah. Generally, they failed to

get the message. Again, in this miracle there was mercy and salvation to an individual, but the breadth of the appeal was to the Jewish people as a whole. This miracle was performed at the time when Jesus was turning from the preaching of the imminent coming of the kingdom to the Jewish nation and was emphasizing more the church and the church age. He now began to tell the disciples about His own crucifixion, the dispersion of the Jews, and the Gentile church age. So, once again, the import of the miracle is far greater than the healing of one man.

Today, we have in the Bible the full story of Christ, from the earliest promises of His coming to His enthronement at the right hand of God after His ascension back to Heaven after His death and resurrection on earth, see Acts 2:33, 34; Acts 5:30, 31; Acts 7:55, 56. In addition to all those things, we have the sure promises that Jesus is coming again for us if we have placed our trust in Him (Acts 1:10, 11; John 14:1-3).

With the completed Bible and the Holy Spirit to teach and convince us, God has decreed that our walk shall be by faith (Hebrews 11:6) and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is what gives substance or reality, to things hoped for, and it gives conviction, or persuasion of actuality, of matters not seen. Therefore, God has not gone on throughout this church age convincing unbelievers of the reality of Spirit power by causing Spirit power to work visibly in the physical creation. God works providentially to carry out His will among mankind. The convicted sinner who comes to salvation is fully convinced that God had dealt with him, but he has nothing tangible to prove to another sinner that anything has happened to him. Our walk must be by faith.

These things have been written in the full awareness that there are many "so-called" miracle workers going about in the world today. It is fitting that we give some notice to their claims.

(1) Probably the most numerous type of claimed miracles are nothing but sham and fraud. There are many stories of the "terribly afflicted person" who travels secretly with the "healer" and gets healed over and over again as they travel from place to place. Many people seem actually to want to be deceived by this kind of charlatanism.

(2) Another kind of false miracle is performed by the principle of mind over matter. Probably, the ailment of the

victim is only imaginary in the first place. Then the only “miracle” needed is the changing of the imagination. But under the spell of hypnotism men have done seemingly supernatural things. Hypnotism has been freely used by some of the more clever miracle workers. Then there is the field of mental telepathy or thought transference apart from a tangible channel. People have received ideas and impressions in this way that they regarded as miraculous. When one enters into this field he lays himself wide open to demon possession.

(3) The third kind of illegitimate miracle is performed by the power of evil spirits. The Bible gives us much evidence along this line. The magicians of Egypt duplicated about half of the plagues that Moses and Aaron brought on the land, see Exodus 7 and 8. The demon-possessed man of Mark had supernatural strength. He also knew who Jesus was without being told. Apparently, the witch of Endor, as a minion of the Devil, was given such power that she called Samuel up from the dead (I Samuel 28).

The main purpose of Jesus working many miracles in His days on earth was to demonstrate to the Jews what the fulness of the kingdom of God would mean to them when it should come (Matthew 4:23). In other words, miracles illustrated how conditions in general will be in the Millennium. When the Jews rejected the King, this kind of thing ceased until the King shall come again. In the last days, the Devil, the great imitator of Christ, will become a prominent worker of miracles; see Revelation 13:11-15, and Revelation 16:13, 14. So, if one should see a miracle today, let him know it is of the Devil and not from God.

CALLING, ELECTION, AND PREDESTINATION



33

“Are there any distinctions to be made among: calling, choosing, election, purpose, predestination, foreknowledge, and foreordination?”

This general subject is so extensive and complex that a comprehensive coverage of it would be impossible in an article of this nature. Therefore, we shall confine this study to the definitions of words with few illustrative examples.

(1) *Kaleo* is a Greek verb which simply means “I call,” and it is used in a very broad range of situations in the New Testament. At Matthew 22:3, the king sent his servants to call those who had been (previously) called to the marriage feast, but they refused to come. We find at II Timothy 1:9 that God saved us and called us with a holy calling. This calling is that we should serve Christ in church capacity according to New Testament teachings.

Sometimes Bible “callings” are heeded, and sometimes they are refused.

The church — “the called out” — gets its name from the word that generally means “to call.”

(2) *Eklego* means “I choose” or “I elect”; both one and the same in the Greek text. Let it be fully understood there can be no distinction made between these two words in the Greek. Luke 14:7 says the Jews “chose” the chief places at the feast. John 6:70 says Jesus “chose” twelve apostles, but one of them was a devil. Evidently, this was not an irresistible calling either to salvation or to acceptable service. Colossians 3:12 says the church are the “elect” of God. I Peter 1:2-12 says church saints are “elect” according to the foreknowledge of God to special blessings in the present life and to a special inheritance in Heaven. Romans 11:5 states there was a remnant in Israel

through whom God carried out the “election” of grace. Note that the emphasis is on the election of grace, and not on the election of the individuals who embraced the plan of grace. Also note that the election did not stop with salvation, but it went on to include the matter of a faithful testimony after the people was saved. Ephesians 1:4, 5 relates that God “chose” us in Christ before the foundation of the world for us to be holy and unblameable before Him in love. God also predestinated us to mature sonship to Himself through Christ. This sonship is where we stand in contrast with Israel and her relationship with God under the law. The devising of the church lies within the determinate counsels of God, but the part of a man in the church depends on the age in which he was born, and on his own choices and actions with reference to the church.

(3) *Proitithemi* means “I purpose,” and *proorizo* means “I set a boundary ahead of time.” Romans 9:11-13 says that before Esau and Jacob were born, God “purposed” that the elder should serve the younger; and, he loved Jacob but hated Esau. This is not an arbitrary determining to love one and hate the other, but it is the statement of a principle that worked throughout the Old Testament times. As Abel was chosen over Cain, the second-born (the spiritual) always took precedence over the firstborn (the fleshly). In the personal lives of these two sons, Jacob always had an appreciation for spiritual values. Esau was almost as devoid of appreciation of spiritual values as a beast of the field. From the human standpoint, this is why God loved Jacob but hated Esau.

In the Greek text, *proorizo*, “I set a boundary beforehand,” commonly rendered “predestinate,” means to determine something before it comes to pass. A prominent usage is Romans 8:29, where the foreknown are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Those whose egotism demands that they “prove” they were personally predestinated to salvation before the foundation of the world, do not take the time to learn that the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans are devoted to comparing the law and grace as the rules of life for Israel and the church respectively. Many Bible situations teach us it is the church as a corporate body that is first foreknown and then predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. To come into this predestination, the individual must first be saved; then he must by his own choice

and initiative conform himself to the way of life of the church. The course and destiny of the church are predetermined, but the course and destiny of the individual are determined by his choices and actions.

“Foreordain” is used only at I Peter 1:20. It is a mistranslation of the Greek word *proginosko*, “I foreknow,” or “I know beforehand.” This text simply says Christ was known before the foundation of the world, but He was manifested in resurrection power and glory for the special benefit of New Testament saints in “the last times.”

Romans 11:2 says God foreknew Israel, and Romans 11:26 says, “And so all Israel shall be saved . . .” In the meantime, the nation Israel has been in the worldwide dispersion for almost two thousand years. Generally, they have been reading the law with the same veil on their hearts that led their fathers to crucify the Messiah. Evidently, multitudes of them as individuals have lived, died in sin, and gone to Hell just as those of other nations. But still, “all Israel shall be saved.” How long will it take us to learn it is the nation as such, which is foreknown, purposed, and predestinated to be finally regathered and saved?

Let us try to sum up this matter in the following terms:

God started out with Adam to bring the entire race to eternal glory under the bounds and limitations which God Himself had set. The limitation was that each man should choose his own destiny in Christ, (Colossians 1:19). Both Cain and Abel were called to salvation, and they would have been called to right service if they had arrived at the point for it. Since Cain would not respond and Abel was dead, the call to separation and service went to the sons of Seth. The breaking down of the separation was what brought the flood. Noah escaped because he alone was a man separated to God. After the flood, God blessed Noah and all of his sons. But almost immediately, the blessing of one son had to be changed into a curse. Then the race of Shem became the “predestinated” people.

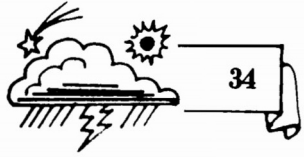
Out of Shem, God elected Abraham, and out of Abraham He elected Israel. The covenant, as it pertained to individuals, was conditional, but as it pertained to the nation and its final destiny, it was unconditional. And so, all Israel shall finally be saved and keep the covenant, but many Israelites shall go to Hell by their own choice in the meantime.

As a concrete example of what is said above, let us consider the following situation: God made the unconditional promise that He would give the seed of Abraham a land flowing with milk and honey for an everlasting inheritance. There is every reason to believe the generation who came out of Egypt under Moses would have received this promise if they had walked after the Lord in the full obedience of an unwavering faith. Of course, they did not do so, and they did not attain to the final predestination that pertains to the nation. So it is the nation as such that is predestinated to finally inherit the good land as an everlasting possession, as opposed to individuals of that nation.

At Matthew 16:18 and Matthew 28:20, Jesus made a hard and fast predestination of the church — it would continue to the end of the age. But the New Testament is filled with admonitions and warnings that, if our destiny is to be the same as the destiny of the church, there are certain conditions we must meet by our own choice and initiative. These are repentance, faith, baptism, full commitment to the church, and a walk by New Testament rule.

I still believe predestination is like a plan flight scheduled from Little Rock to Washington. The company furnishes the plane and dictates the terms of the flight. The individual pays his fare, boards the plane, and keeps his seat until his destination is reached. Keeping his seat is not keeping himself saved, but it is keeping himself within the will of Christ for his life.

If God predetermines one person for Heaven, does He not predetermine another for Hell by failing to predetermine him for Heaven? If a person's destiny is fixed long before he is born, does he really have any choice? Is it not plans that are predetermined rather than individual people?



“What is the purpose of the great tribulation? Will there be any saved then other than Jews?”

The great tribulation is the period of seven years in which this, the church age, will come to an end. It is divided into two equal periods of three and a half years (Daniel 9:27; II Thessalonians 2:6-10; Daniel 9:25, 26). History proves that the seventy weeks of Daniel are really seventy periods of seven years each, or four hundred ninety years. Four hundred eighty-three of these years were past when Christ was rejected and crucified. This leaves seven years to be fulfilled at the end of the present church age (Daniel 9:26). Of course, Daniel 9:27 presents Antichrist as a peaceable ruler and a great benefactor of the Jews for the first half of the seventieth week, and then he changes suddenly into the most ferocious enemy they have ever known.

Matthew 24:21 indicates the tribulation is to be the worst time of trouble ever to be experienced on the earth. Probably the flood was the worst visitation the world has known thus far. In it the entire human race died except the eight members of the household of Noah. Also, all animal life on the dry land died except the seed of each which Noah kept alive in the ark. There was probably a greater disruption among mankind when the races were scattered abroad at Babel than most of us have imagined. We can only guess at the tearing apart of families that took place at that time. It was a terrible time indeed in the region of Sodom when the whole area of the Dead Sea was burned up with the people who lived there.

There were fearful times in Israel during the period of the judges, and later at the time of the invasions from Babylon and the Babylonian captivities. It was not without due cause that the 137th Psalm was written to depict the miserable condition

of Israelites in an alien, idolatrous, and unsympathetic land. Later, when the remnant of Israel rejected and crucified Christ, when Jerusalem was taken by the aliens and the remnant of Israel were driven into the worldwide, agelong dispersion among the nations, it was truly a tragic time to the covenant people of God. But we are told that never, before or after, is there a time equal to the great tribulation in terror and destruction. It seems to be time when the forces of righteousness are almost completely removed from the world, and Antichrist creates almost a complete hell upon the earth for three-and-a-half years.

In all of the visitations upon mankind which have been mentioned, God had His purposes which He wished to accomplish. As to the great tribulation, there appear to be three main goals.

(1) God means to bring the covenant nation, Israel, to repentance and salvation. There are some unconditional terms of the Abrahamic covenant as it applies to the nation Israel that will not be fulfilled until the great tribulation brings them to repentance (John 5:43; Daniel 12:1). This matter will be discussed further later.

(2) The great tribulation will separate the true from the false in the realm of religion. This is especially true in the field of professing Christianity. The spirit of Antichrist is using every device under Heaven to place all religions on a common level in the minds and hearts of mankind. This is being done so that all possible may be induced to embrace the religion of Antichrist when he makes his actual appearance. The real disciples of Jesus, who will not go after Antichrist, will suffer persecution as the result of their refusal to embrace him and his religion.

(3) The power of the ungodly nations of the world will be broken in the tribulation (Psalm 2:5). The godless civilization of Cain prospered mightily until God destroyed it in the flood. The Roman Empire seemed unconquerable until it crumbled under the rot of its own corruption. The nations of the world today are going in the direction of pooling their resources and ruling God out of their reckonings, even as it was when the ancient peoples assembled together to build the tower of Babel. But Matthew, chapter twenty-five, tells us of when God will assemble all nations before Him and bring terrible judgment

upon them. This judgment is largely accomplished in the battle of Armageddon at the close of the tribulation period.

Eight events will be listed which mark the time progression in the great tribulation as the writer sees it:

(1) The tribulation will be preceded by definite signs which the Bible lists in abundance and in great detail. II Thessalonians 2:3 tells us the day of Christ will not come except there come a great falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed as the son of perdition (or the son of violent destruction). Matthew 24:34 tells us that when the signs of the end begin to appear, “this generation” will not pass until all things be fulfilled. This seems to mean that when the definite signs of the end of the age begin to be fulfilled, within that generation, this world will come to its end. The final seven years will be the time we refer to as the great tribulation.

(2) The second monument of the end times is the appearance of Antichrist on the world scene. His appearance marks the actual beginning of the seven-year period. He does not just come suddenly out of nowhere. He comes unobtrusively from among a small people (Daniel 11:23). For this reason we will not know exactly where to begin to count time on him. From II Thessalonians 2:4, 9, 10 we learn that he appears in the guise of God, sitting in the temple of God — evidently in Jerusalem. He does great false signs and lying wonders after the manner of Satan, purportedly proving to the unsaved and the uninstructed that he really is God. This ministry seems to be for the special benefit of the Jews, who are yet looking for the coming of the Messiah. All the greatest attainments of the Devil have been reached by his works as an imitator of God.

(3) I believe the third great sign of the end times is the activities of the church during the first half of the seven years period. It is true many Baptists believe the church will be raptured before the appearance of Antichrist. But where is the scriptural proof of any who will oppose “the man of sin” after the church is taken out of the world? I suggest that the following scriptures allude to the working of the true churches during the first half of the seven-year period: II Thessalonians 2:6, 7; Revelation 3:10; and 11:3-6.

(4) I believe the true church, after it has proved itself in opposing Antichrist during the first three-and-a-half years, will be raptured along with all of the other saved, both living and dead (Matthew 24:40, 41; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 11:8). If so, the world will be left without any saved people during the second three-and-a-half years. Antichrist will give unsaved people practically a hell-on-earth during this time.

(5) When the saints are gone out of the world, there is no one to oppose Antichrist, and he works in the vicious guise of the Devil himself (Daniel 9:27; II Thessalonians 2:3, 8). This is the real tribulation and it lasts until Christ comes with the saints at the end of the seven years.

(6) According to Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, 16, the Jews will see the “abomination of desolation” standing in the holy place immediately after Antichrist changes character when the saints are taken out of the world. Then is when they flee into the mountains lest those sealed at Revelation 7:4-8, should be slain and none would be left with whom God could complete the covenant.

(7) In the second half of the seven years, Antichrist seeks to destroy Israel, but they flee to a place of refuge (Revelation 12:6, 16). He then proceeds to destroy the harlot of false religion (Revelation, chapter 17). As a sort of aftermath, he destroys the existing political and economic systems so that he may make himself supreme in all things (Revelation, chapter 18).

(8) Some time near the end of the seven years, the forces are marshalled for the battle of Armageddon. Bible students tell us that Antichrist and his army will be on one side and a mere handful of Jews will be on the other, but this inequity does not make much sense. Perhaps the sheep nations of Matthew, chapter 25, will be on the side of the Jews. In other words, perhaps nations such as America will align themselves with the Jews. The battle is ended by the coming of Christ with the glorified saints (Revelation, chapter 19).

**CONDITIONS OF LIFE
IN THE MILLENNIUM**



35

“Please explain the verse of Scripture that says sinners will be accursed at one hundred years of age (Isaiah 65:20). Will any be saved in the Millennium? If so when will they be changed into glorified bodies?”

Let us first go into the matter of what peoples will go into the Millennium and what their condition of life will be. Though Baptists are not agreed as to just when, in relation to other events, the resurrection of the saved will take place, we are pretty well agreed that this resurrection will occur before the Millennium begins. The view of this writer is that the first resurrection will be about the middle of the seven years that immediately precede the Millennium.

(1) Thus, all the saved dead will be resurrected and will go into the Millennium in glorified bodies (I Thessalonians 4:13-17). This same passage also says the living saved will be changed into glorified bodies at the same time and all will go away to be with the Lord. The sum of this is that all who are saved up to the time the Millennium begins will go into it in glorified bodies. This includes the babies and other irresponsibles living at the time the resurrection takes place.

(2) The remnant of the twelve tribes of Israel who are sealed at Revelation 7:4-8 will go into the Millennium in the flesh. It is believed these sealed ones are the same group as those called the elect of the Son of man at Matthew 24:31. This is the reassembling of the house of Israel for the fulfillment of the terms of the Abrahamic covenant with them in their ancient homeland.

(3) Matthew 24:30 speaks of all the tribes of the earth mourning when they see Christ coming in glory. Although a

large portion of the human race will die in the great tribulation, yet there is a judgment of the nations as such when Christ comes in power (Matthew 25:31-46). The nations which have befriended the Israelites will go into the Millennium in the flesh as nations. The enemies of Israel will be destroyed as nations.

The result is that the mighty host of the glorified saved will be congregated in and around Jerusalem (Matthew 19:28). In addition, there will be the nations in the flesh which are spared at the judgment of nations in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. Israel and the other righteous nations probably will multiply greatly in the ideal environment which will prevail.

To rightly estimate this situation, we need to note some points of comparison. The world situation then will be so different from what it is now as to defy our power of imagination. First, let us note some working principles now:

(1) We live on a cursed earth (Genesis 3:16-19). Originally the earth produced an abundance of good fruits (Genesis 2:8, 9). Now it produces sparingly with much painful toil.

(2) The Devil is the god of this world (Job 1:7; II Corinthians 4:3, 4). His name is "Destroyer" in both the Hebrew and Greek languages (Revelation 9:11). His names, "Satan" in Hebrew, and "Devil" in Greek, both indicate that he opposes all the good works of God.

(3) This present life must shortly end in death (Job 14:1, 2; Hebrews 9:27). The book of Ecclesiastes teaches us that life is a thing of vanity and vexation of spirit if we live it for what we can get out of it here.

Now let us note how different the environment of the earth will be in the Millennium:

(1) The curse will be removed, and it will be much as it was in Eden before the curse came (Genesis 2:8, 9; Isaiah 35:1 and 11:6-9). As we know the creation now, it is beset by drought, flood, extremes of heat and cold, impoverished soil, and an endless array of animal, plant and insect pests to greatly curtail production of good fruits. The general production of good fruits will far excel anything we have ever seen.

(2) Christ will be God and King over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9; Daniel 2:44 and 7:27; Luke 1:33). Isaiah 9:6 says in part in

the Hebrew text: “. . . and the chieftainship shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonder-worker, Wise-counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

(3) Apparently life will end in death only for the unsaved. Note the description given at Zechariah 8:4, 5 of Jerusalem, where Christ sits enthroned. These saved during the Millennium are made spiritually perfect in the new birth and they live in a righteous environment. It appears that a righteous king, a righteous environment, and a sinless spirit would take all inclination to sin away from the flesh of the saved person. It is being suggested that those who are saved in the Millennium do not die, but after a certain period they are translated over into the glorified group. This is based on the premise that sin is the cause of death, and since there will be no sin in the saved person, there will be no cause for Him to die.

Now let us note a translation of Isaiah 65:20 from the Septuagint, which is a Greek version of the Old Testament made by seventy translators a short time before Christ. These seventy scholars probably understood both the Hebrew and the Greek languages better than most language students of today. The following is a more or less interpretative reading of what this Greek text seems to say: “There shall not be any more there a still-born baby, nor an old man who shall not fulfill his time: for one shall be a youth at a hundred years, but the sinner dying at a hundred years, even he shall be accursed.

Let us sum up the things asserted and implied in this reading:

(1) No babies will be born dead, because life, peace, and righteousness are the governing principles in the Millennium.

(2) Old men will not die before their time because life and righteousness prevail.

(3) A righteous man will be a youth when he is a hundred years of age, because the principle of death is not working in him. Note how long the patriarchs lived before sin became so rampant as it is today.

(4)The sinner shall die and be accursed at a hundred years, because sin is still in him by his own choice and death is the inevitable result of sin. The Prince of life will be the God of the world, but the sinner will stand as a willful rebel against this Prince and the life which He has offered.

(5)The only time period mentioned is a hundred years. The sinner will die and be accursed at the end of this probationary period. The logical implication is that the righteous man will be translated over into the group of the glorified redeemed. Nothing is said about a judgment of those saved during this period. We conclude that in a sinless environment all saved are faithful, and no judgment in this respect is necessary.

Since the events of the end times are so complicated, and there is so much leeway for a speaker or writer to be misunderstood, let us again try to sum up some facts about the Millennium:

(1)Though only a remnant of Israel will live through the great tribulation (Revelation 14:18-20) apparently those who do live through it will be saved when Jesus comes with the saints (Romans 11:26; Zechariah 12:10-14 and 13:6). The writer knows nothing to do with Romans 11:26 except to suppose it is to be regarded as literal and all-inclusive so far as the salvation of Israelites in the Millennium is concerned.

(2)Multitudes of the sheep nations who go into the Millennium will be saved (Zechariah 8:20-23). There will be religious assemblies in Jerusalem which will cause the assembly of David described in the sixth chapter of II Samuel to fade into insignificance. Notice that the leaders going to these world wide assemblies are Jews.

The question is often raised at this point as to whether the sinners who live through the tribulation and go into the Millennium have "a second chance" to be saved. It would appear there will be a few people in this category. That is, they live through the tribulation as sinners, and then they have the opportunity to be saved in the Millennium. But from the many plagues of Revelation we get the idea that only a small remnant of the human race will manage to live through this terrible time. The odds are heavily in favor of an individual's being

killed in the tribulation and his going to Hell before the ideal times of the Millennium arrive (Revelation 19:17-21).

(3) Multitudes of people who are born, grow up, and live their lives in the Millennium will not be saved. Satan will be able to muster an army in number as the grains of sand on the seashore at the end of the thousand years of the reign of Christ on the earth (Revelation 20:7-9). This should teach us that ultimately it is our own choice in Christ, and not so much the environment in which we live, that determines whether we go to Heaven or to Hell.

Let us conclude this discussion by stating some primary purposes to be carried out in the Millennium:

(1) God will fulfill all the promises to Israel made in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 13:14-17; 17:8, 19; 28:13-15; Exodus 3:7, 8).

(2) The Millennium appears to be a time of final preparation of all the saved for the Heaven age. The people numbered among the saved will range all the way from unborn babies to those like Enoch and Elijah, who were taken up bodily into Heaven as a reward for their faithfulness. It is supposed that all will be raised from death in the condition of young adulthood, for this seems to be the most fruitful and satisfying condition of life. In this respect, all will go into Heaven on a basis of equality. On the other hand, nothing will ever change the fact that some have borne a fruitful testimony in the present life and others, for various reasons, have not borne such a testimony.

(3) Finally, before the door of opportunity is closed forever, the Millennium is to demonstrate to the intelligence of the universe the superiority of the rule of Christ over the rule of the Devil. There used to be an expression that in Hell sinners will say, "amen" to their own condemnation. This seems to be abundantly true.

“Where do the dead go at death to await the resurrection?”

Ancient and primitive peoples generally have believed there is something in the constitution of man that survives the death of the body. It seems only individuals and small groups have had their minds turned or perverted from this general pattern of thinking, to the idea that people go into nothingness when they die. In other words, belief that man goes out of existence at death is the exception, and belief that he continues to live after death is the general rule.

Among ancient peoples there was a widespread belief that the spirit or soul of man goes into a place of keeping, which they believed was far down beneath the surface of the earth. Many regarded this region as being more or less of a prison house, where the disembodied spirits were held to await a resurrection, or a releasing of one sort or another. The Bible follows this pattern of thinking in its presentation of the region of the dead. This does not mean that the Bible approves such myths as the Greeks had on the subject, but it does mean the Bible uses many of the same words the ancient heathen peoples used to designate and describe the place where the spirits of the dead go at death. If the Bible did not use such accommodation, and if it used only heavenly language, then men could not understand its teachings. This is stated in view of some things that must of necessity be said in the discussion to follow.

In Old Testament times the spirits of the dead are represented as going to a place that is called in the Hebrew language Sheol. This name is derived from a Hebrew verb, shaal. Some believe Sheol is derived from a meaning of this verb, which is to be quiet or at rest. It appears more likely it is derived from a far more prominent usage of the word which is,

“to ask, or to make inquiry.” The name of King Saul is derived from this latter usage of the word, because he was the king whom the people asked or demanded of God. It is believed Sheol is the region of the question mark. It is the place about which men ask questions, but they do not get an answer, because people do not come back from the region of death to tell the living what death is like.

In Old Testament times all of the dead went to Sheol. At Genesis 37:35, Jacob said he expected to go down grieving to Sheol over the supposed death of Joseph. It is expected all will agree Jacob was a saved man when he said this. Job expected to go down to Sheol at death, Job 17:13. Likewise Job must have been a saved man when he said this. There are several other references to the saved going to Sheol at death.

Let us turn aside just here to state that Sheol is used sixty-five times in the Old Testament. It is translated grave thirty-one times, hell thirty-one times, and pit three times. There is no real reason why it should not have been rendered the same way every time in the common version of the Old Testament. When it is rendered grave it only uses the grave as symbolic of death in general, including the region where the spirit, or soul, went at death.

The spirit of the unsaved also went to Sheol at death. Psalm 9:17 says that the wicked shall be turned into Sheol, and all the nations that forget God. At Isaiah 14:15 it is said that the fallen angel who became the devil is brought down to Sheol, to the sides of the pit. There are many other references to wicked men’s going to Sheol at death.

It is not meant to leave the impression the saved and the unsaved were in exactly the same place and in the same condition in death. They were not. Both groups were in the state of being dead and being in the place called Sheol — the unknown world. But here the similarity ends. The Scriptures go on to tell us about a region in Sheol, called the pit. Only the unsaved went into this pit. It was the lower region of Sheol. Isaiah 14:15 says the fallen angel went down to the sides of the pit. Ezekiel 26:20 says the Lord would bring the wicked king of Tyre down with those who descend into the pit, and he would set him in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old.

Probably the most vivid picture we have in the Old Testament of those who went down into the pit is given in the second chapter of Jonah. Jonah inside the great fish was alive

and conscious. He experienced all sorts of terrors, horrors, and torments. For future reference, let it be remembered that Jesus said as Jonah was three days and three nights inside the great fish, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. In other words Jesus went even into the pit during the time he was dead, to pay the price for our redemption.

However, the clearest presentation we have of the condition of the dead in Old Testament times is given by Jesus, as recorded at Luke 16:19-31. It is believed it is an Old Testament situation because Jesus said the brethren of the rich man had Moses and the prophets, and they should hear them. He says nothing about their hearing the New Testament teachings. Therefore, the New Testament Scriptures were not given at the time when Jesus presented the situation.

Let us note some similarities and some differences between the rich man and Lazarus. They were both dead; they were both disembodied spirits; they were both in the region called *Hades* in the Greek New Testament. It seems to be the exact counterpart of the Hebrew *Sheol*. They were close enough together to see one another and to talk together. But Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man was tormented in a terrible burning. If the details of this situation seem unbelievable to some let it be recalled that such details as time and space do not mean the same in the realm of infinity, where Lazarus and the rich man were, as these details mean to us.

Let it be repeated it is believed this is the best presentation we have in the Bible of the condition of the saved and the unsaved in the region called *Sheol* in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The sum and substance of what we have presented thus far is that, in Old Testament times, all the dead went to a region called *Sheol*, the unknown world, from whence men do not return to the present life. The saved and the unsaved were in different locations and different conditions, but they were still in the same general realm to the extent they could communicate with one another. The saved rested in comfort and hope of the future resurrection. The unsaved were in hopeless torment.

Now let us turn our attention to the real question in hand, of what the condition of the dead is in the present age, or whether

conditions have changed any from the Old Testament situation.

It is hoped that we shall be able to set forth to the satisfaction of all who will view the evidence frankly that a noteworthy change has taken place in the condition of the saved since Jesus died, rose from death, and ascended back to heaven. The writer does not find evidence that the condition of the unsaved has changed at all. They seem to be like the rich man in torment awaiting final consignment to the lake of fire that burns with brimstone forever. On the other hand it is believed that when a saved person dies now his spirit, or soul, goes immediately into heaven, into the presence of God, to rest there among all the redeemed, as he eagerly awaits the resurrection of his body.

In our discussion of the change of the condition of the saved dead that took place with the works of Jesus in the world, the matters will be presented in three stages or steps of progression. It is admitted that, in the nature of the Scripture situations, these steps overlap somewhat. The steps are: 1. What Jesus would do in death; 2. What Jesus did in death; and 3. The results of what Jesus did in death.

(1) What Jesus would do in death: Our first Scripture to be presented is Hebrews 2:14, 15, translation from Greek text, "Since therefore the children have become sharers of blood and flesh, also he in a neighborly manner partook of them, in order that through the death he might make inoperative the one having the might of death, that is the devil.

And he might change over those, who in fear of death through the life were liable to bondage." Some facts stated are enumerated. Jesus partook of flesh and blood in the same way the children partake of them. He did this in order that he might die, and in so doing, He might destroy the Devil, who has the might of death. He would change the condition of those who had, all their lifetime, been held in bondage to the fear of death. This seems to imply that, though the dead saved of former times were kept and comforted, they were yet kept in the devil's prison house of death, with the Devil holding the key of death. It seems to say further that when Jesus should die, He should deliver the saved out of this condition.

Our next Scripture on what Jesus would do in death is John 12:31, "Now is the judgment of this world, now the prince of this world shall be cast out." These words were spoken by Jesus only about two days before His crucifixion, after it was

clearly evident the people would crucify Him. He was thinking of what would be accomplished in His death to break the reign of the Devil in the region of death. Let it be remembered that the saved spirits were still held in the region of death, the Devil's prison house, called *Sheol* and *Hades* respectively in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

(2) What Jesus did in death: Our first Scripture under this heading is I Peter 3:18-20. It is admitted this is a hard passage to rightly translate, interpret, and apply. It is believed the specific goal in this epistle is that the saved should have the living hope which was made available to us through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, I Peter 1:3. It is believed the saved's having this hope is dependent on our obedience to the Scriptures in doctrine, practice, and works. In other words it does not hold out a living hope to all the saved, but only to the faithful of the church. It is not a matter of who is saved and who is not. But it is a matter of what saved people have the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of salvation. It is believed these are confined to the faithful. This matter is relative of course, for no one adheres completely to New Testament standards.

But now let us note the verses mentioned in the beginning of this topic. I Peter 3:18-20, "Because even Christ once died concerning sins, a righteous one on behalf of unrighteous ones, in order that he might lead you forward to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit:

In which even to the spirits in keeping going he preached,

To the ones unpersuadable at one time, when the longsuffering of God was expectantly waiting in the days of Noah, the ark being in preparation, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water."

Among Bible students, the point at issue here is the question of when Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison. Some have believed it means that when the generation of Noah was alive, Jesus went in the Spirit and preached to them. Such students have difficulty explaining what is meant by the spirits' being in prison, or keeping. It is believed they were held in the prison house of death at the time Jesus went and preached to them.

Another point at issue is just what guise of the spirit it was in which Jesus went and preached to them. It has already been

stated that some believe Jesus went through the agency of the Holy Spirit and preached to the generation of Noah while they lived in the world. It is agreed Jesus did this, but it is not agreed this is what our present passage is speaking of.

The sense of the passage seems to be that when Jesus was put to death in the flesh, He entered into a phase of life wherein spirit took the place of blood as the principle of life. That is, in the present life, the life of the flesh is the blood thereof. Several Old Testament Scriptures say this. When one dies he neither goes out of existence nor into unconsciousness. He enters into a phase of life wherein spirit becomes the principle of life and consciousness. A number of Scriptures seem to intimate this. If so, then when Jesus was put to death in the flesh, He went in the spirit, by which He began to live when He died in the flesh, and preached to the dead of Noah's day, who were held alive and conscious in the region of the dead.

The most difficult question of all is that of what segment of the society it was to whom Jesus went and preached. It would seem He preached to all the dead, who had lived in Noah's day, and perhaps He preached to all of mankind back to Adam. According to the Bible these people did not have much in the way of revelation while they lived in the world. Perhaps He told the saved their faith in the coming one was vindicated. Perhaps He told the unsaved the one whom they had refused had come, and that He was in the process of delivering all who had exercised faith in Him. The opinion is ventured that it was the saved from Adam to Noah who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus and appeared to many in the holy city, Matthew 27:51-53. The opinion is ventured further that they then went bodily into heaven as a firstfruits of the resurrection.

Debates have been held on the subject of whether Jesus went to hell at the time of death. It is doubtful whether the final hell was in operation at that time. But He certainly did go the way of all mankind in death into the realm of disembodied spirits, called *Sheol* in Hebrew, and *Hades* in Greek. Otherwise He did not actually pay the prescribed price for man's sins. It is suggested this is what our present passage is speaking of, and that it was at the time of death that He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Whether or not Jesus brought some of the people of Noah's day bodily out of the graves, it is believed He brought them out of *Sheol*, and carried them into Heaven into the presence of

God, that is the spirits of them. The parallelism in this passage is that, just as Jesus went into *Sheol*, or *Hades*, He brought the spirits of the saved out, and deposited them in Heaven in the very presence of God, so Jesus has made a way of spiritual access into Heaven in the present age for those saved people who conform themselves to the New Testament pattern.

This is why the subject of baptism is injected into the situation. Noah had been a saved man a long time when the flood came. But the baptism of the flood delivered him from the hindering influence of the ungodly generation among whom he lived. It set him over into an environment wherein he could serve and commune with God in a more complete manner. If we conform our lives to the commitment we make in baptism, then we, in the spiritual sense of course, are permitted to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The final goal is that, just as the spirits of the dead saved rest in the very presence of God, so the spirits of the living saved, who have committed themselves to walk according to the New Testament plan in doctrine and practice, may likewise have intimate communion with God through a special ministry of the Holy Spirit that prevails during the church age. This relationship is largely what the new thing of the New Testament, or covenant, is.

If any doubt the scripturality of this argument, let them meditate on the fact that, though Israel was typically saved under the blood of the passover lamb, they were not really delivered from the threat of going back into the Egyptian bondage until they were typically baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Note I Corinthians, chapter 10. Israel between Egypt and the Red Sea were like saved people outside the church — saved, but not separated from the power of the Devil to dominate their lives and hold them in bondage to the sinful unbelieving world. Does anyone believe this is baptismal regeneration? It is not. But it does say baptism is essential to the fullest salvation of the life.

To sum up what we have just tried to present, it is believed that when Jesus died, His spirit, or soul, went into the region where the souls of all the dead were. He announced that deliverance would come to believers through him, that is those who had put their trust in Him back in life. He overcame the Devil, who had held sway over all the dead, and brought with Him the souls of the saved when He came out of the region of death.

What Jesus did in the realm of death appears to be described in a parable spoken by Jesus at Luke 11:21, 22. Here He said, that when a strong man fully armed keeps his house, no one comes in and disrupts his house. But if a stronger one comes, he overcomes the strong man, disarms him, and disrupts his household. The parable is spoken in connection with a contest of power between Jesus and the Devil. Jesus had cast out a demon, a member of the Devil's household. Then in the parable, the Devil is the strong man who kept his household of death. Jesus is the stronger one who came in, bound the strong man, and disrupted his household. He broke the power of the Devil in the realm of death.

The result of the foregoing is partly told at Revelation 1:18, . . . and the one living, and I became dead, and behold I am living into the ages of the ages, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." What could be more logical and scriptural than that Jesus in death went into the region of death, engaged the Devil in final combat, overcame him, took the keys of death and Hades from him, and came out bringing the souls of the saved with Him, and depositing them in the heaven to which He went, in the very presence of God? So when the saved die, the body goes to the earth, dead as a stone, but the soul goes into heaven to await the time of the resurrection of the body.

(3) Results of what Jesus did in death: In the second chapter of Acts, Peter explained to the assembled Jews the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church on Pentecost. In substance he says, when Jesus had arisen from the dead, He went into heaven, claimed a promise the Father had made to Him, and poured out the Spirit on the church. With reference to the resurrection of Jesus Peter says, verse 24, ". . . whom (Jesus) God raised up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it." That is, since Jesus had done no sin, and death is the penalty of sin, the justice of God demanded that Jesus be raised out of death. For our present purpose the pertinent fact is that Jesus did win the victory over death. Verse 31, reads, ". . . (David) foreseeing, he spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that neither was he forsaken in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." Again the vital point is that Jesus won the victory over the Devil, and He t came forth in power and glory out of the Devil's prison house of death.

We now turn to Matthew 27:51-53, where we have the account of the bodies of the sleeping saints, who came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus, and appeared to many in the holy city. Apparently the Bible nowhere gives us any direct information as to what then became of these. It seems a fair supposition they came forth in glorified bodies. If so, then they must have gone bodily into heaven, and they must be there in their glorified state today. For Jesus, on the mount of transfiguration, is the only man who went over to the glorified state, and then returned to the fleshly state. The case of Jesus is the exception to the rule, and not the rule itself. Glorified men simply do not become unglorified again. The Bible proof of this is Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Men such as Lazarus were simply raised back to their natural bodies, and they died again.

We are aware that Jesus is called the firstfruits of the resurrection, and he is, since it is through him that all resurrection is accomplished. But in Israel, when the offering of the firstfruits was observed, it was not a single grain, nor a single stalk of grain that was offered. It was rather a sheaf, or bundle, of grain, containing many stalks and grains that was offered. It is no marvel that God should raise Jesus up in power and glory, but it is a great wonder that He should be able to raise up those who had been sinners in life in glory and immortality. It is believed these who came out of the tombs are bodily in Heaven today, as a guarantee to us that we shall likewise go bodily into Heaven at God's appointed time. It is believed that the firstfruits offering in Israel typifies these things. If some rebel at the idea of men's being bodily in Heaven today, then let them explain where the bodies of Enoch, Moses, and Elijah are. Enoch and Elijah went bodily into heaven, and Michael contended with the Devil over the body of Moses. And Moses had a body like those of Jesus and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. If the bodies of some men are in Heaven, then it is not illogical that the spirits of all dead saved people are likewise in Heaven.

Another Scripture which has a great bearing on our present theme is Ephesians 4:8-10, which we translate from the Greek text, "Therefore he says, Having gone up into the height he led captive captivity, and he gave gifts to men.

"But that he went up, what is it except that also he went down into the lower parts of the earth?

“The one having gone down, he is also the one having gone up above all the heavens, in order that he might fill up all things.”

It is freely agreed that the primary theme here is the principles by which spiritual gifts were bestowed on the church during the apostolic age. But some things are said which have a vital bearing on the condition of the dead.

The language indicates that, before Jesus ascended above all the heavens, He went down into the lower parts of the earth. Perhaps some think this refers to the grave. The grave is a mere scratch in the surface of the earth. It is nowhere near the heart of the earth, or the lower parts of the earth. In other words Paul is here referring to the region which is called *Sheol* in Hebrew, and *Hades* in Greek. It is the region where the spirits of dead people went in a state of consciousness in Old Testament times. And it is still the place where the spirits of unsaved people go at death.

Let us here recall Matthew 12:40, where Jesus says, “For just as Jonah was inside the great fish three days and three nights, thus the Son of man shall be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.” When one reads Jonah’s experiences, as described in the second chapter of Jonah, he does not get the picture of someone lying unconscious in the grave. But rather it is a picture of someone very much alive and conscious. Jonah does not typify the body of Jesus in the grave, but he typifies the spirit, or soul, of Jesus in death, in the region called *Hades* generally, but called the heart of the earth in this passage.

To sum up, the spirit of Jesus went into the realm of disembodied spirits. Later He came out and ascended to the utmost height of heaven. He was enthroned at the right hand of the Most High God, exactly where Lucifer said he would set his throne, see Isaiah 14:14.

But Jesus did not go alone when He went into Heaven. Our passage says He led captive captivity. It is believed it means He led the spirits of the dead saved, who had been held in the prison house of the Devil, who up until that time held the might of death, Hebrews 2:14. Since He led this captivity, it is believed He took these disembodied spirits of the saved into the very presence of God, and deposited them there to await the resurrection of their bodies.

One other Scripture we wish to note on the subject of the state of the dead. It is Revelation 6:9-11, which we shall not

quote, but merely make a few comments on it. There is a more extended discussion of this passage in *Stevenson's Commentary on Revelation*.

In these verses the fifth seal is opened, and John is given a look into the heavenly scene. He sees the souls of those who had died for the faith of Jesus. They are in Heaven, beneath the altar, in the very presence of God. They pray for avengement of their blood on those who dwell upon the earth. They do this because they know when such avengement comes they will be reunited with their bodies. In other words, they are praying for reunion with their bodies. They are at rest, but desire resurrection of their bodies.

These souls are given white robes of a symbolic nature, and they are told they must wait until their brethren in the world have fulfilled their destiny in the world before the resurrection can come. It is believed these represent all the saved dead during this, the church age.

For our present purpose, the vital fact is that these souls are not in the prison house of death, far removed from the abode of God, but they are in His very presence. They are where they can look upon God, with Jesus enthroned at His right hand. They can receive direct words of comfort and reassurance from Him. They are in the company of all the redeemed who have left this present world. It is believed they are removed out of that environment where Abraham and Lazarus could see and hear the rich man in the misery of his torment.

It is believed this state is a reward which God gave to His Son to take His people out of the general realm of death, and to deposit them where no unpleasant thing could touch them any more. They are not in their final estate, for their bodies are still dead in the graves. But they are far advanced over the condition of the saved up to the time that Jesus went into death, and came out victor over death.

At funerals we often hear references to such a one's going to Heaven. The import of this discussion has been to set forth in scriptural terms that is exactly what happens when a saint dies. He goes to Heaven.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS



37

What constitutes a scriptural divorce? Are divorcees who remarry living in adultery, or is the former marriage dissolved in the eyes of God? Should divorcees leave their new spouses and return to first mates to avoid living in adultery? If remarriage is an act of adultery, can God forgive it and bless the new marriage? Should a pastor marry a divorcee with an unscriptural divorce?"

There are almost as many variant opinions on this subject as there are Bible students who seriously study it. The effort here is to set out an outline that will be consistent with the Scriptures as a harmonious whole.

The creation story sets forth that God created a man in His image and likeness. When no fit companion was found for man among the animal creation, the Lord cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and took one from his sides (not necessarily a rib), and He made the woman from whatever He had taken from the side of the man. Adam expressed the vital kinship between himself and the woman who was taken out of him. And he stated that the union between them should be closer and more lasting than any other human ties. Each one was to be the complement of the other in a union, without which neither one could attain his highest potential in life.

God did not give Adam and Eve a divorce law. Because they were not then sinners, nor did they at that time live in a sinful environment, there was not a need either for a divorce or a divorce law (Genesis 2:21-24; and 1:31). Of course sin did soon enter in, and with it the need for laws to regulate and restrain the activities of mankind.

As the race multiplied sin began to multiply among mankind. God appealed to all mankind in Cain and Abel to be saved and to walk in the paths of righteousness which the Lord would lay

out before them. But Cain refused to follow the Lord, and there began to be two manners of people in the world: the godly and the ungodly. It was the sixth generation of the race of Cain that introduced polygamy (multiple marriages) among the race. Lamech took to himself two wives (Genesis 4:19) and there began to prevail the system which God had not ordained. To put it mildly, we, as Christians, should have as little as possible to do with the ungodly things introduced into society by ungodly people.

This polygamy, or multiple marriages, was embraced by Abraham, at the urging of his wife, in a situation that seemed to him was a necessity, to carry out the purposes of God (Genesis 16:3, 4). The Lord allowed it after a fashion, but He demanded that Abraham cast out the bondwoman and her son (Genesis 21:10-12). The descendants of Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, have been a trouble and a snare to Israel, the legitimate seed of Abraham, for many generations — even down to our own time. God allows some sins which His people embrace, but there is always a bitter payoff for them in one way or another (Genesis 17:18, 19). After Abraham, the having of multiple wives and concubines became common among the covenant people, Israel, but it seems to have always been a source of trouble and sorrow among the people.

Moses gave Israel a divorce law because it became likely for a man to inadvertently marry a harlot (see Deuteronomy 24:1, where the uncleanness mentioned is sexual uncleanness.) At Matthew 19:3-9 the Pharisees point Jesus to this precept of Moses to get him to agree that a man may put his wife away for just any cause. Jesus refused to agree with them that keeping a law, which regulates a sinful society the best that it may be done, makes them perfect before God. This perfection before God is what they claimed to have. Many try to make the sayings of Jesus in this passage the rule for church action with reference to divorce and remarriage. But Jesus himself says in verse 11, that not all men can live up to the rules that he had stated. He was trying to show the Pharisees they were falling short of perfection, as opposed to his laying down rules for church discipline.

The practical rules on marriage, divorce, and remarriage are contained in chapter seven of I Corinthians. These principles will be stated briefly with applicable references to verses.

I Corinthians 7:1, 6-8. It would be better for the sake of the kingdom of God for a man not to touch a woman. He could then devote all his energies and affections to kingdom activity.

I Corinthians 7:2-5. But those who have necessity should marry, and neither one should defraud the other of the marriage obligation because of kingdom work, except perhaps for a short time. Let the reader here consider the case of the person who has necessity for the marriage relationship, but the rules of his church forbid him to have such a relationship.

I Corinthians 7:10, 11. A married couple should remain married when they become church members, or they must remain unmarried if they separate. In those days the commitment to church membership was such an impressive thing that people were inclined toward the idea of renouncing worldly obligations completely when they entered into the church relationship. Our failure to impress the seriousness of this commitment today is largely responsible for the widespread indifference to our duty to our church.

I Corinthians 7:12-16. A believer should not put away an unbelieving mate when the believer commits himself to the church. The sanctifying of the children in such a case simply refers to their being brought under Christian influence by the believing parent. The same is true in the case of the unbelieving husband or wife.

On the other hand, if the unbelieving partner leaves the believing one, then the forsaken believing partner is not in bondage to the broken tie. If this means anything at all it must mean the deserted one is free to marry again. But he should marry a church member the next time. (See verse 39.)

I Corinthians 7:17-24. A person is not to abandon the usual rules of life when he becomes a Christian. It has already been mentioned that committing oneself to the church in the apostolic days was a notable matter in the lives of those who did it. Not only did the church receive the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel, but it has also been the lot of the church to live responsibly in the world while it has waited almost two thousand years for the return of the Lord.

The testimony of an upright life in worldly matters while we wait for the Lord is one of the most convincing items of our witnessing. The word of mouth testimony of many preachers has been nullified by the wrong testimony of their lives among their fellowmen.

I Corinthians 7:25-40. These verses discuss the matter of virgins and whether the virgins should marry when they become church members. Some have suggested it is the case of a young man who is engaged to a virgin when he becomes a Christian, and whether he should go ahead and marry her or break the engagement. Others have seen it as the father of the virgin, and whether he should permit the girl to marry or forbid her to do so when she becomes a Christian. Still others have surmised it is the case of whether the young man should keep his own virginity when he becomes a Christian, or whether he should go ahead and marry the girl to whom he is obligated.

I would be forced to become a “fence straddler” and suggest it embraces all three of the cases. Ultimately it seems to come down to the issue of whether we are to go ahead and assume all the obligations of the present world, or whether we renounce some or all of them. I believe some should devote their entire lives to study, prayer, and preaching. I believe others should devote their lives chiefly to earning money, the money to be devoted ultimately to the advancement of the kingdom of God.

There is one marriage law that is hard and fast. If two Christians are married, they must resolve their differences and live in peace together as Christians should, or they must separate and live alone. So far as I can see no others are unalterably bound to a marriage partner.



Dr. Fred G. Stevenson

Direct Answers to Difficult Questions is a compilation of essays written by Dr. Fred G. Stevenson in an effort to help his readers understand several difficult Bible questions which are seldom treated in commentaries or Sunday sermons. Although the statements fairly represent the convictions of the author, he never intended that his readers subscribe to all his ideas, but that they would be compelled to deeper thoughts about the topics.

Dr. Fred G. Stevenson, having been born in South-central Arkansas surrendered to the ministry in 1932. He was educated in the Missionary Baptist College at Sheridan, Arkansas, Arkansas A & M College and the Missionary Baptist Seminary. He was a public school teacher before his long tenure as instructor in Bible languages and theology at the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas.

"The great doctrinal point I have tried to put over in recent years," wrote Dr. Stevenson, "is that the New Testament is not a discussion of a new plan of salvation, but it is rather the discussion of a new way of God's dealing with special people in the world, this special people being the church."

Upon his death in May, 1981, Dr. Stevenson left behind several unpublished manuscripts, this present work being one. It is given to the Lord's work in hopes that it will enrich the spiritual life of many!