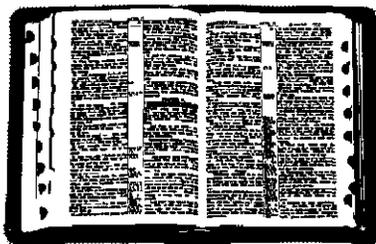


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXIII

OCTOBER, 1982

NUMBER 10

ANSWERS for our hope

Send Bible questions to:

Marshall E. Patton
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WHO DID SIN?

QUESTION: In John 9:2 the disciples asked Jesus, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" How could the disciples reason that some sin of the blind man caused his blindness, since he was born blind? Does God afflict people in anticipation of sin in their life? Does God punish us in this life for our sins? If so, how do we distinguish between such and suffering that is not caused by our own sins? Also, please explain the latter part of verse three: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

ANSWER: Answering the above questions involve "filling quite an order." Nevertheless, they are good questions and are indicative of careful study and good reasoning. Indeed, they merit Bible answers.

Scholars point out varied theological views which may account for the questions of the disciples. There was the doctrine of Metempsychosis (transmigration of souls) which affirmed that as just punishment for sin the soul after death was made to pass into another body and suffer commensurate with evil done. Another view was that one could sin before he was born—even in his mother's womb. An appeal was made to the struggle of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:22). Here it is affirmed that Esau tried to commit murder before they were born. Then there is the ever popular view that God afflicts individuals with tragedies, sufferings, and misfortunes because of their own sins. Still another view is obvious from our text, namely, that God afflicts individuals because of the sins of

their parents.

For the sake of brevity and space, I pass over the doctrine of Metempsychosis and the matter of sinning in the womb by saying that such concepts are simply unwarrantable assumptions. Should one affirm otherwise, then attention will be given to it.

Concerning the view that God afflicts individuals because of the sins of parents, the Bible does not teach it. In fact, the Bible teaches otherwise. However, the view was one of long standing among the Jews. No doubt this concept grew out of a misunderstanding of the following passages: Ex. 20:5; 34:7; 1 Kgs. 21:29.

The references in Exodus refer to consequences of sin on the part of parents. Children today suffer such, i.e., the children who suffer hunger, abuse, etc., because of a life of dissipation on the part of a parent. This, however, differs from that inflicted directly by God as punishment for sin. The latter reference involves a specific instance in a time when God dealt directly in particular instances for the purpose of developing and executing His scheme of redemption. This was not the rule by which He dealt with His people.

Ezekiel dealt with this misconception (punishing children for the sins of parents) which the Jews expressed in the form of a proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezk. 18:2). The error of this concept is refuted throughout Ezk. 18, especially in verses 20-24: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him....."

There is suffering that comes in this life as a consequence of our own wrong doing. Often we reap what we sow in this life (Gal. 6:7, 8).

There is suffering that comes from natural calamities in life. This is true because of the immutable laws of nature. Such comes upon the just and the unjust alike. Such calamities are like the rain (Matt. 5:45). Such does not evidence wickedness or righteousness on the part of the recipient.

Then there is suffering which we experience because we are Christians—by virtue of our relationship to Christ. This involves ridicule, slander, persecution, etc.

Such comes from the enemies of truth. Consider the following: John 15:18, 19; 2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:10-12; 1 Pet. 4:12-16. This is the suffering set forth figuratively by the word "scourges" in Heb. 12:6. Such is part of the chastening of the Lord which is "for our profit" (Heb. 12:5-11). The context shows the nature of the suffering under consideration and demands the conclusion that both suffering for right as well as words of reproof are included.

The Bible does not teach that God punishes directly in this life for our sins. While there have been exceptions to this rule (in time of miracles, when for specific purposes such was done), such were just that—exceptions—not the rule. Otherwise, it necessarily follows that God is a respecter of persons and, in the final analysis, a terrible monster.

That God does not punish directly for sin in this life is evident from instances in the personal ministry of our Lord. Jesus took issue with this concept in the case of the blind man: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents" (Jno. 9:2, 3). Again, Jesus took issue with this concept as shown in the following verses: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:1-5).

The book of Job affords us perhaps even a clearer refutation of this concept. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar accused him of sin. Throughout the book of Job they argue that such suffering as experienced by Job was evidence of sin on his part and of justice on God's part (Cf. Job. 4:7; 8:1-7; 11:1-6). Job, however, denied their accusation, affirmed his innocence, and exposed their inconsistencies. In the end he was vindicated by God (Job. 42:7-9).

We live in a world where injustices prevail, irregularities are in evidence, the wicked often triumph and the righteous often suffer defeat. We need to remember that "pay day" does not come in this life. In the judgment justice will prevail, wrongs will be made right, the wicked will be punished, and the righteous will be rewarded.

Concerning the latter part of verse three "but that the works of God should be made manifest in him, "Jesus turns their attention from the cause and purpose which they attributed to this misfortune, i.e., punishment for sin, to a nobler purpose which the blindness now served, i.e., manifesting the works of God (miracles) in Jesus. While God allows such suffering (from whatever cause), He has the power to overrule such to His glory. In this instance such was used to confirm the deity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25). In this statement, Paul dealt with the essential elements of hope as it is presented in the word of God. What we hope for we do not now see. Hence hope always looks to the future. Yet there is within us an earnest longing for that coupled with the expectation of realizing this future aspiration. Thayer says that hope is "Expectation of good; joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation." Webster defines the verb form as "To long for with expectation of obtainment, to expect with desire; trust, expect."

It is possible to desire what we do not expect to have. As a boy I found it entralling to look through the Sears and Roebuck catalog at the pictures of shiny new bicycles. But those were lean years and I never expected to have one. On the other hand, it is possible to expect what we do not earnestly desire. Discipline was a fact of life in our home. When I was caught doing what I should not do, I fully expected to receive my "just recompense of reward" but let me tell you I did not earnestly desire it! But the Christian's hope combines a longing look to the future with fervent expectation. Someone said that hope is "faith pointed to the future."

Hope distinguishes the Christian from the unbeliever. Paul wrote the Thessalonians that they should "sorrow not even as others which have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13). Hear the words of the renowned infidel Voltaire near the close of his life.

"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of beings, in casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born....The box of Pandora is the most beautiful fable of antiquity. Hope was at the bottom."

Contrast that to the radiant joy expressed by Paul even when he was chained to a Roman guard under house arrest in Rome. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Hear Paul near the end of his life as he faced martyrdom for the cause of Christ. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my

departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Do you not see the contrast between the despair of Voltaire and the radiant, confident hope of Paul?

The Basis of Hope

Is the Christian merely a dreamer? Does he seek "pie in the sky" without any substance to his expectation? I submit that hope is reasonable. Peter said "and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). The farmer plows and plants in hope of harvest. Even the forest sheds its leaves and bares its branches to the cold breath of winter in hope of the renewal of spring. It is even more reasonable that the Christian hope for that which he does not now see.

(1) The Christian hopes because God cannot lie. Our hope is as certain as the very character of God himself. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). The Hebrew writer said it is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). God's performance in the past is the guarantee of his promises for the Christian. He said "let there be light" and it was so. He said of man in the days of Noah "his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Then came the flood, for God had spoken. Through his servants the prophets God foretold many things concerning the Messiah, all of which came to pass. Even the word which he spake by angels was steadfast. It is therefore reasonable to expect God to fulfill his promises to the Christian for God cannot lie.

(2) The Christian hopes **because Christ was raised' from the dead.** "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." "Firstfruits" implies later fruit. In his own victory over death he secured the keys of Hades and death (Rev. 1:18). Thus he "delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15). The sign of all signs was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. That was the crowning victory which forever settled his claim to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). It is reasonable therefore to put our trust in him who has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18).

(3) The Christian hopes because of the **gospel assurances** offered by the witnesses of the resurrection. After his resurrection he was "seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:5-8). These witnesses repeatedly spoke of "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5).

The Results of Hope

(1) Hope **protects** us. We wear "for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thes. 5:8). Helmets are worn to protect heads. The head is the source of direction for the body. It is our intellectual center. Rob man of his hope and you have deprived him of his noblest aspirations.

(2) Hope **purifies** us. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 Jno. 3:3). A constant awareness of the hope set before us is a deterrent to sin. One of the greatest avenues of escape from temptation is the remembrance of the "home over there." The brilliance of our hope is calculated to outshine the cheap glitter of momentary pleasure.

(3) Hope **stabilized** us. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:19-20). Anchors fasten ships to unseen foundations. Even so, "we have an anchor" in an unseen world which keeps us from being "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" and which gives us confidence amid the turbulence of human life. We all have our storms to weather, our moments of despair, the unmistakable ache of disappointment, the wrenching moment of uncertainty when we cry out "What are we going to do now"? But, brethren we have an anchor cast in yonders world and it is this blessed assurance which gives us endurance. Indeed "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:3-5). It is for this reason that we are able to "gird up the loins of our (your) mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13).

The Objects of Hope

(1) We hope for **eternal** life. What is eternal is never ending. Life here is short, uncertain and its thread is often fragile. Death is the common lot of all. The ominous certainty that we shall die makes us sigh for a higher and better existence where the second death "hath no power." It is difficult for our finite minds to grasp the sublimity of a vast expanse of unending bliss in the presence of the Lord.

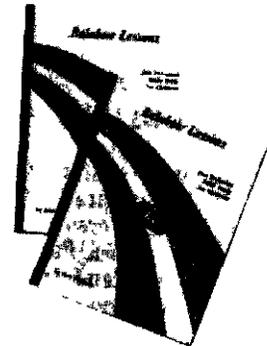
(2) We hope for **glory**. We sing about it often. "Oh that will be glory for me." "Just over in the glory-land." We long for the splendor and beatific happiness of heaven. Peter wrote about our "living hope" assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, in terms of "an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). Here the new decays and becomes old. Wood rots. Metal rusts and corrodes. Paint dims, cracks and peels. We are subject to corruption. But in heaven nothing will ever rot or rust or grow old. We hope for an **inheritance incorruptible**. Here the cleansed becomes unclean. The spotless becomes stained and soiled. But in heaven there will be nothing unclean to defile. We hope for an inheritance

undefiled. Here the most gorgeous corsage withers and dies and we cannot even tell what color it was. We also fade. The glow of youthful cheeks succumbs to the relentless passage of time and is replaced by the pallor of old age. Youthful vigor is supplanted by the aches and uncertain steps of the aged. But there, nothing fades. Thus we sing of the "Land of fadeless day" "where we never grow old" and where "the roses never fade." We sigh for an inheritance that **fadeth not away**.

(3) We hope to **see Jesus**. We do not know what form he will have nor what we shall be like but John assures us that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jno. 3:2). Paul said "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). What a glorious expectation to see the Word of life, the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the Bright and Morning Star, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Head of the church, the Alpha and Omega! What rapture to be in the presence of Him who has been our High Priest, our Advocate and our Mediator! What inexpressible bliss to be able to thank him forever for his grace, mercy and love!

"But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:25). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

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PICKING AT THE THORN"

In the June 1982 issue of this paper, page 135, there appears an article by this writer, "A Modern Thorn." We urge readers of this article to refresh your memory by reading the original piece again. In that article we are punctuating the need for repentance on the part of alien sinners prior to baptism for remission of sins. Our application sets forth a severing of any and all adulterous unions in the case of multiple marriages. James D. Bales has replied to this article via letter and I would like to offer his reply for the further study of the reader along with my response. Brother Bales is often quoted, not only regarding his position on marriage, divorce and re-marriage, but on other matters and is highly respected for his scholarship and influence. He has written a widely circulated book in defense of his position, "Not Under Bondage." Here is what he said in the letter about the article.

"Since the Lord does not hold marriages involving aliens to the same standard to which He holds Christians, those divorced and remarried in the world do not violate Matthew 19:9 for they are not under it. Therefore, they have nothing to repent of concerning their second marriage.

"Paul said Christ did not speak on marriages involving aliens (1 Cor. 7:12). Why do brethren insist that He did? Paul did not apply Matthew 19:9 (1 Cor. 7:10-11) to marriages involving aliens. Why do some brethren insist on binding on marriages involving aliens what Paul refused to bind? It is this simple.

"The position I occupy is as old as Paul and also as old as A. Campbell."

Our brother advocates this position: (1) The Lord does not hold marriages involving aliens to the same standard he holds Christians. (2) Those divorced and remarried in the world do not violate Matt. 19:9 for they are not under it. (3) They have nothing to repent of concerning their second marriage. These contentions argue two standards for marriage, one for aliens and one for Christians. Is this the only place where two laws or standards apply? If the alien is not subject to the standard for marriage, what about God's standard for anything else? And if not amenable to God's standard in all, why in anything? If nothing, then such are not sinners and have no need of the gospel. Fact is, the standard of God for marriage originated with the first man and woman and has upon the basis of that monogamous relationship continued

with His approval. Such constitutes the divine foundation and moral fiber upon which home, family and society rests.

Matthew 19:9, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Here Jesus sets forth the only circumstance, fornication, under which one with a living mate may marry without sin. This presupposes understanding that such justification is for the innocent party only. Jesus is answering the Pharisees, as they posed what they hoped would be a question to trap Him, referred them to the Scripture setting forth the original design of marriage.

A second question is then directed to Jesus, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?" Answer: Moses suffered, or allowed, because of hardness of heart. No longer, however, was this to be tolerated under the New Covenant but the strictness of the original law would be restored. Thus, Jesus in establishing the New Covenant incorporated the original law of marriage applicable to all men.

Our original article concluded repentance necessitates a quitting and turning from sin on the part of the alien. Fornication (adultery) is sin that must be repented by the alien for the blood of Christ to cleanse along with lying, stealing, murder or anything else contrary to the Law of God. Such is to be mortified, put to death to avoid God's wrath upon those who live in them (Col. 3:1-10). Those divorced and remarried, in the world (non-Christians) violate Matt. 19:9 when such is without grounds for the innocent. Any second marriage is a living in sin and all such stand in need of repentance. Repentance is quitting and turning from sin.

Now, the part about Paul and Christ and the contention that Paul did not apply Jesus' teaching to marriages involving aliens. Jesus taught that all who divorced for any reason except fornication and marry others are living in adultery. Paul taught that people can "live in" adultery in Col. 3:5-7. Now Jesus spoke as the Father gave him the words (John 12:49-50; 17:8) and he restored the law concerning divorce and remarriage to that which was from the beginning. He taught that fornication on the part of one's mate is the only reason for divorce and remarriage while the other is alive. Does this not agree perfectly with 1 Corinthians 7?

1 Corinthians 7 deals with a relationship where one is a Christian and one is not. The Christian is to give up the marriage partner rather than give up Christ and the hope of eternal life. Not give up the unbelieving partner to be married again but to live a life of celibacy as there is no justification involved here due to fornication. He is simply saying the believer is not bound to the unbeliever that he must give up Christ to hold that unbeliever. Paul is telling the believer to hold to Jesus even if it means the loss of the unbelieving companion. No conflict with what Jesus has previously

taught and no change of application as far as the original principles stated in Matthew 19:9. Same standard, universal application, saint and sinner alike. So, we are right back where we started, to square one. "And I say unto you whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Let each "examine self" (2 Cor. 13:5) and guard against being guided by heart instead of by the Scriptures.

SHARON CHRISTIAN

It is with much sadness that we take note here of the untimely death of Sharon Christian, wife of Rick Christian who preaches at Shepherdsville, Kentucky. Herpes encephalitis was the cause of death. She passed away eleven days after giving birth to their second child, a baby girl. Sharon was 26 years old. She leaves behind her husband, Rick, and a daughter aged 2, besides the baby.

Funeral services were conducted on September 29 in Louisville by the editor. Graveside services were conducted at Ravenswood, West Virginia by Mike Willis, who had baptized Sharon a few years ago. Our hearts ache for this young brother and his two small children. While we sorrow, we are comforted by the fact that she was faithful to the Lord. Indeed, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

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BIBLE CLASSES AND WOMEN TEACHERS

NOTE: The material for and/or the charts themselves have been gathered from a number of sources. I claim no originality for any of the material.

Even though there are two different subjects mentioned above, when discussions are held with anti-class brethren, they usually insist on including both issues in the same proposition. But for the life of me, I cannot understand why. For, it should be obvious to any thinking person, that unless one can be convinced that Bible classes are scriptural, there would be no reason to discuss whether or not women may teach in some of them.

In this study I want to present some of the material that I have used in discussions with brethren who oppose the use of classes and women teachers.

1 Clarifying The Issue

We Are Not Discussing:

1. WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
HE DOES ! II Tim 2:2
2. WHETHER THE CHURCH HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
IT DOES ! I TIM. 3:15
3. WHETHER A WOMAN HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
SHE DOES ! II Tim. 2:2 Titus 2:1-3
4. WHETHER WE CAN HAVE A "SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION."
WE CANNOT !

WHAT IS THE ISSUE ?

MAY THE CHURCH HAVE AN ARRANGEMENT OF CLASSES IN WHICH THE WORD OF GOD IS TAUGHT, WITH WOMEN TEACHING SOME OF THE CLASSES ?

Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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In the above chart the issue is set forth. You can readily observe that the questions under consideration involve general authority. But as you can also see, individuals (both men and women) are commanded to teach; and the church is also the "pillar and ground of the truth." (There will be a separate section at the end of this study concerning women).

All who are Christians readily agree that scriptural authority may be established in three ways, statement of fact or command, approved example, and necessary inference or conclusion. This is seen in the following chart.

How To Establish Scriptural Authority

2 PHIL 4:9
SEEN -- EXAMPLE HEARD COMMAND
THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 EXPRESS COMMAND THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME '1 COR 11:23-24

2 APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE -- AND UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WHEN THE
Tells The Time DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD
ACTS 20:7

3 NECESSARY INFERENCE - FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
Frequency of Observance Remember Sabbath

EXPEDIENCY - ANY HOUR WITHIN THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
Human Judgment

'PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD '1 THES 5:21

In the above chart we see that baptism is commanded. We also have an example of a baptism being performed; and when Philip preached unto the people of Samaria, although there is no mention of baptism being included in his sermon, the conclusion we must reach is that Phillip preached baptism or else they would not have known that they needed to be baptized.

Not only is authority established by command, but we must understand that commands may be either general or specific.

	GENERAL	SPECIFIC
3 "GO" MARK 16:15	*	
"PREACH" "	*	
"GOSPEL" "		*

4 General Command

INHERENT IN A GENERAL COMMAND IS AUTHORITY FOR WHATEVER IS NECESSARY METHODS AND AIDS IN THE CARRYING OUT OF THE COMMAND.

METHOD: "A SYSTEMATIC MODE OR MANNER OF ACTION. REGULAR OR ORDERLY PROCEDURE."
Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary
Vol 1, Page 1064

AID: "TO HELP, TO ASSIST, TO SUPPORT, EITHER BY FURNISHING STRENGTH OR MEANS TO AFFECT A PURPOSE." IBID Page 37
Build An Ark; Go; Sing; Teach

It should be obvious to all that a general command includes methods (how done) and aids.

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5 Generic Command How Done Things Necessary

"Go" Mark 16:15	WALK, RIDE, RUN, SWIM	LEGS, FEET, HORSE, CAR PLANE, WATER
"Preach" Mark 16:15	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	PREACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE, AN ARRANGEMENT
Edify Eph 4:11-16	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	PREACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE AN ARRANGEMENT
Teach II Tim. 2:2	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	TEACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE AN ARRANGEMENT

It is impossible for example, to TEACH without a teacher, a student, a time, a place, material, and an arrangement.

An Arrangement

Why bring up all this? Because, Bible Classes are simply an arrangement of the church to expedite the general command to teach, and nothing more. God has loosed the arrangement.

What About Arrangement?

6 GOD LOOSED!

ACTS 20:7 -- PREACHING
ACTS 19:9 -- DEBATE
ACTS 28:30-31 -- INFORMAL DISCUSSION
GAL. 2:2 -- GROUP TEACHING
COL. 4:16 -- EPISTLE READ

Even though most of the arrangements shown on the above chart are arrangements used by individuals, I contend that any arrangement that may be used by the individual in carrying out the general command to teach may be used by the church in carrying out the general command to teach. You cannot do a right thing in a wrong way, and you cannot do a wrong thing in a right way.

On the above chart you will note that they had preaching (Acts 20:7). An individual may use this arrangement for spreading the word, and the church may use this arrangement.

In Acts 19:9 (and Acts 14:26 - 15:2) we find the apostle Paul disputing daily in the school of Tyrannus. The church may also use this arrangement to carry out the general command to teach.

Next we find Paul sending for the elders of the church and having an informal discussion with them. The church may also use the informal discussion arrangement to teach.

Fourth, Paul said he went up to Jerusalem and communicated unto them the gospel, but to them which were of reputation. Thus we have Paul not only discussing the gospel with the brethren in Jerusalem, but also privately with a few. Thus we have segregation and classification in this example of individual teaching. So, just as this arrangement can be

used by the individual, it can also be used by the church.

And finally on our chart, we observe that an epistle was to be read by the church. But just as the epistle can be read by the church, so also the individual can use this arrangement for teaching.

These examples from the New Testament set forth the fact that God has **loosed the arrangement**, and therefore these and any other arrangements deemed expedient may be used by both the individual and the church.

Objections

Those who will not use the class arrangement because they cannot find it **specifically mentioned** in the New Testament are willing for the church to use other arrangements that are not specifically mentioned. They are, in fact, willing to use such arrangements as radio and TV programs for teaching. But I believe those who are not blinded by prejudice can see from the following chart that an arrangement such as a radio or TV program and the Bible class arrangement are parallel.

7 These Are Parallel!	
RADIO BROADCAST	BIBLE CLASSES
1. ELDERS OVERSEE	1. ELDERS OVERSEE
2. ELDERS MAKE ARRANGEMENTS	2. ELDERS MAKE ARRANGEMENTS
A. TIME	A. TIME
B. PLACE	B. PLACE
C. REGULARITY	C. REGULARITY
D. TEACHERS	D. TEACHERS

On a number of occasions those who are opposed to the church using the Bible class arrangement use the words "privately" and "publicly" to describe the kind or manner of teaching. The truth of the matter is the adverbs "publicly" and "privately" are always used in the New Testament to describe PLACE not kind or manner of teaching; and God hasn't bound the place.

8 God Hasn't Bound The Place	
Both Public & Private	
PUBLIC	PRIVATE
IN TEMPLE -- Acts 2:46	TO EUNUCH -- Acts 8:28
PUBLICALLY -- Acts 20:20	PRIVATELY -- Acts 20:20
IN SYNAGOGUE -- Acts 18:4	JAILOR -- Acts 16:31
CASTLE STAIRS -- Acts 21:35-37	APOLLOS -- Acts 18:26
PLACE NOT BOUND!	

Many argue that the only arrangement to be used by the church for teaching is the church assembling together in one place. However, assembling is not an arrangement. After brethren assemble, then whatever arrangement is to be used in teaching must be decided upon. Besides, many who oppose the Bible class arrangement teach that the church may use such

arrangements as radio programs, TV programs, the church buying and making arrangements for tracts to be passed out for teaching, none of which a person may specifically read about in the New Testament. How then, can such arrangements be used by these brethren since they are **not specifically mentioned** in the New Testament? Because brethren are simply carrying out the general command to teach.

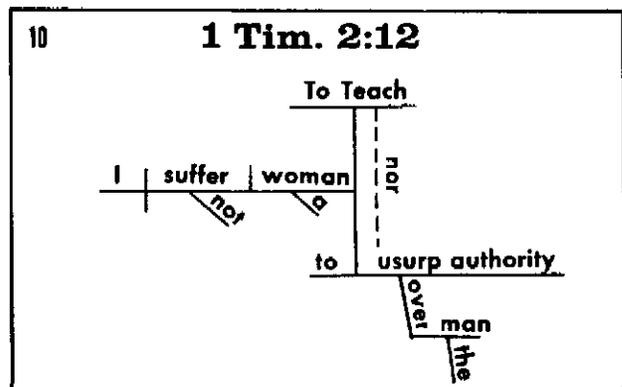
The objection is always raised, "Is it scriptural to worship without having Bible classes"? The answer is obviously yes. However, the problem arises when brethren make that into a law and say that those who use Bible Classes as an arrangement for teaching are sinning. It would be just as wrong for those who have Bible classes to say that the only arrangement that can be used is Bible classes and no other arrangement (radio or TV programs, etc.) can be used.

WOMEN TEACHERS

In view of the fact that the Bible Class Arrangement may be used for teaching the Bible, what about women teaching some of the classes?

9 CLARIFYING THE ISSUE	
1. WOMEN ARE COMMANDED TO TEACH. Titus 2:3 Tim.2:2	
A. THE WORD "ANTHROPOS" THAT IS TRANSLATED "MEN" IN II Tim. 2:2 MEANS: "WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX, A HUMAN BEING, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE. THE PARTICULAR MAN UNDER CONSIDERATION, WHO HE IS FROM THE CONTEXT." THAYER Pages 46-47	
2. WOMEN DID TEACH. Acts 18:26	
3. A WOMAN MAY TEACH:	
A. ANYONE	
B. ANYWHERE	
C. ANYTIME	
AS LONG AS SHE DOES NOT VIOLATE I Tim. 2:12 !	

We see from the above chart that women are commanded to teach. We learn this from both general (2 Tim.2:2) and specific (Titus 2:3; Acts 18:26) authority. In fact, a woman may teach anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as she doesn't violate 1 Timothy 2:12. As you can see from the following diagram of 1 Timothy 2:12, both infinitive phrases, "to teach" and "to usurp authority," are modified by "over the man."



Also, you can see from a passage (Acts 4:18) that is parallel in construction to 1 Tim. 2:12, that both "to speak," "nor teach" are both modified by "in the name of Jesus."

11 PARALLEL PASSAGES

"COMMANDED THEM NOT TO SPEAK AT ALL → in the name
Acts 4:18 NOR TEACH → of Jesus."

"CUSTOMS NOT LAWFUL FOR US TO →
RECEIVE, NEITHER (NOR) TO OBSERVE → being Romans."
Acts 16:21

"BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH → over the man."
1 Tim 2:12 NOR USURP AUTHORITY →

THERE IS NOT A VERSE OF SCRIPTURE FROM GENESIS TO
REVELATION THAT TELLS A WOMAN NOT TO TEACH !!
1 Tim 2:12 TELLS HER NOT TO TEACH OVER THE MAN !!

Thus Paul said that a woman is not to "teach over the man" (that is be in authority over a class of men) "nor usurp authority over the man" (which is an unlawful seizure of power or authority).

Some have argued that 1 Timothy 2:12 is speaking of a woman in the assembly. They are forced to take this position because they deny that both "to teach" and "to usurp authority" are modified by "over the man." They would have the passage read, "But I suffer not a woman to teach"—period, which would mean she could not teach at all and would have Paul telling Timothy one thing in 1 Tim. 2:12, and contradicting that in 2 Tim. 2:2 and Titus, 2:3. Thus they are forced to say that Paul is discussing the assembly and paralleling it with 1 Cor. 14:34-35. However if you read the text itself in context, you will see that such a conclusion is not warranted. There is no indication of the assembly—unless women are to be modestly clothed, etc. only in the assembly, which is nonsense. But let's read 1 Cor. 14:34-35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

The Word "Silence"

But, it is observed, Paul tells the women in his letter to Timothy and to the brethren at Corinth that they are to be silent. However, the word "silent" is not the same.

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12 "Silence" Not The Same

The Word "Silence" Of 1 Tim. 2:12 &
1 Cor 14:34-35 Is Not The Same

In 1 Tim 2:12 The Original Word Is
HESUCHIA, "Descriptive Of The Life Of
One Who Stays At Home Doing His Own
Work, And Does Not Officiously Meddle
With The Affairs Of Others "

In 1 Cor 14:34-35 The Original Word Is:
SIGE, SIGAO, "To Keep Silence, Hold
One's Peace, To Be Kept In Silence,
Be Concealed "

Thayer, Page 281

Thayer, Page 574

Also

"It Is Not Permitted Unto Them (women)
To Speak " The Word "Speak" Is From
The Original Word: **LALEO**, "To Make
Vocal Utterances, To Babble, To Talk,
N T Absolutely To Exercise The Faculty
Of Speech "

Bagster's Analytical Lexicon, Page 245

The word "silent" (silence) is used in two passages in 1 Cor. 14:28,34. Both times it is used it means absolute silence.

As one can see from the context of 1 Cor. 14:34-35, Paul is having reference to the wives of the prophets. For, he said, "if they would learn any thing let them ask their husbands at home" (v.35). Thus we see that he is not speaking to all women, for all women do not have husbands; and second, if this passage is applicable to all women, none could learn "any thing." So, according to the no class, no women teacher people, a woman could not speak or teach in the assembly (which would forbid her singing, since she speaks and teaches when she sings), and she would not be permitted to learn "any thing."

The fact of the matter is simply this. Paul was giving instructions to the Corinthians to regulate an assembly where spiritual gifts were being practiced.

**13 Critical Analysis of
1 Cor. 14**

<p>1. Starts And Stops With Spiritual Gifts.</p> <p>2. Mentions "Tongues" 19 Times; "Prophecy" 12 Times.</p> <p>3. Regulates: (A) Tongue Speakers vs. 27-28 (B) Prophets vs 29-30 (C) Prophets' Wives vs. 34-35</p> <p>4. Gifts Done Away ... Regulations Done Away</p>	<p>5. Principles Still Obtained: (A) "All Things Be Done Unto Edifying" v. 26 (B) "God Not The Author of Confusion" v. 33 (C) "All Things Done Decently And In Order" v. 40</p> <p>6. Does Not Regulate Teaching Program Of The Church.</p> <p>7. Does Not Condemn A Woman For Teaching A Class Of 6-Year-Olds</p>
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Thus as can be seen from the above chart, though some principles are still obtained from the chapter, it does not regulate the teaching program of the church today, and it does not condemn a woman for teaching a class of six year olds. In fact, let's notice this very point on the next chart.

14 Definition of the Word

"PRIVATE"

"CONCERNING A PARTICULAR PERSON OR GROUP OF PERSONS"

"AWAY FROM PUBLIC VIEW" Webster's New World Dictionary

"PERTAINING TO OR AFFECTING...A SMALL GROUP OF PERSONS"

"REMOVED FROM PUBLIC VIEW" The American College Dictionary

"OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW OR KNOWLEDGE" "NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL" The American Everyday Dictionary

"BY ONESELF APART FROM OTHERS, SO OF AN INDIVIDUAL ALONE---OF SEVERAL APART FROM OTHERS"

Thayer and Robinson

AUDITORIUM
PUBLIC TO
ALL

A Private Place
Where Public
People of All Ages
Is Invited.

CLASS OF 6
YEAR OLDS
PRIVATE !!

A Private
Place With
A Private
Fav.

WHEN A WOMAN TEACHES A CLASS OF 6 YEAR OLDS, WHAT SCRIPTURE DOES SHE VIOLATE ??

As you will recall, we have already noted that the words "Public" and "private" in the New Testament, as they are used in connection with teaching, refer to place and not manner of teaching. However if you granted everything that is said by the no woman teacher advocates on 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34-35, a woman would be violating neither of the above passages even according to their arguments if she taught a class of six-year-old children. For, she is neither in the assembly, nor is she usurping authority over the man, for there are no men present.

In view of the facts that a woman is commanded to teach (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:3); and since we have examples of women teaching (Acts 18:26); and since the only restrictions are that a woman cannot "teach over a man" "nor usurp authority over a man," I still maintain that she can teach anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as she does not violate 1 Tim.2:12.

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NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP & RESTORE The Place of Faith in Spiritual Revival

In our last article we studied the need for prayer, if the people of God are to be restored to Him. Nehemiah 9 is one long prayer that serves for the foundation of our study in this issue. There are several phrases that are the keys to understanding what is necessary for proper prayer. It is not enough for us to know that we ought to pray. Who among us would deny that need? Yet, while we all know we ought to pray, the question is why don't we do what we know to be right? There is no person among us who would not say that we needed to pray more often and more fervently, so why don't we? Let us begin our study with some key phrases that will help to give us what we need to motivate us.

Verse 8, "You (God) have kept your PROMISE because you are righteous." Then in Verse 32, "Now, therefore, O our God, the great mighty and awesome God, WHO KEEPS HIS COVENANT of Love ____" Notice in these two phrases we find two statements concerning God's ability and willingness to KEEP His Promises and His Covenant. God has kept His part of the Covenant, and it was done to motivate the Israelites to become what they ought to be before Him. God makes promises to us because of concern and love for His people. These promises are for our benefit and nourishment. Almost every page of His word has some kind of promise in it that He has pledged to do for His children, if we are willing to meet the conditions. Now, let us move directly from the context of Nehemiah 9 and the statements concerning God keeping His promises to broader field of Scriptures, in order that we might show examples of His promises to us on the subject of prayer.

The Promises of God

Mark 11:24 is one of the glorious promises of God concerning prayer. "Therefore, I say to you, ALL THINGS for which you pray and ask, believe that you HAVE RECEIVED them and they shall be granted you." Oh, as we read that, it seems too good to be true. What a promise! So immediately we begin to explain away the verse as not meaning what it says, because it goes contrary to all human reason and experience. But, before we give away the promise, let us remember that Nehemiah said that God Keeps His Promises. Notice the verse said, "Believe that you have received." Faith is necessary in this verse,—a faith so great that we

must believe we have already received the answer even as we pray! An example of this is in Daniel 9, where Daniel began to pray and the Lord sent an Angel to answer his prayer before Daniel even finished it. So it should be with us. We need to believe that we have received the answer before we finish praying. The context of Mark 11 will show us it was the last week of the Lord's life and He was coming and going from Bethany to Jerusalem. On one of the trips into the City of Jerusalem He passed a fig tree that was barren and cursed the tree so that it died. Peter, the next morning, noticed that it was dead. Jesus responds in Verse 22, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'be taken up into the sea', and does not DOUBT in his heart, but BELIEVES that He says it is going to happen; it shall be granted him." Again in THE CONTEXT IS THE NECESSITY OF FAITH, and if there is faith a mountain can be cast into the sea. This is the wonderful promise! Yet, if we are not careful, we will explain it all away. John 14:12-14 speaks of all things given to the believer. The same of John 15:7, if we abide in Him and His word in us, "ask whatever you wish, and it shall be granted." The Promises Of God are so rich and full, and still I live my life so as to be empty and weak. Why haven't we risen above our level of accomplishments in growth, development and labor in His cause? Notice again Romans 8:32. If He did not spare His own Son, will He not give freely to us "ALL THINGS." The point is that if Heaven didn't hold back the most precious gift of all, the Son of God, why would Heaven hold back anything that we need and ask for? Yet, there is an interesting comparison in the statement of the Roman letter in 8:32 concerning the gift of His Son and the answer to our prayer. The gift of His Son was unconditional and without strings. The gift of His Son did not depend on my goodness or ability. The Son was given without conditions, but the gifts to us in answer to our prayer are not Unconditional, but conditional. They are conditional on our FAITH. As we have seen in each of the previously mentioned passages, the answer to prayer was conditioned on our faith.

The Promises and Faith

The reason why we do not pray more is that we do not believe as we ought to. Faith is: "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:4 NIV.). Our prayer and the ability to obey any of the commands of God is based on our Faith. Israel lost confidence in the promise of God and they ended up in Babylonian captivity from which they were struggling to recover. If we need to consider some of the examples of faith and on what their faith was founded, which Nehemiah mentions in this prayer, the first example is that of Abraham. Oh, we know the story well, and sometimes that means that we can just skip that part, but follow along as Nehemiah says that "You (God) found his heart faithful to you."

The first event in the life of Abraham was his calling to leave Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was a pagan city and there probably was not one worshiper of Jehovah in the entire city. Abraham may never have heard of

Jehovah before himself, but after that one conversation he was willing to leave his homeland and to go to a place that he had never even heard of or seen, nor ever talked with anyone else who had ever heard of it before. He took about 400-500 people with him on this journey. Palestine was only 600 miles due west, but the Arabian desert was directly in between, and he could not travel across the desert. So, it meant a lengthy journey of at least 12 months from Haran after his father Terah died. Finally, when he got there he had to live in tents and found the land full of Canaanites and famine. "Do you mean this is what the Lord brought me all this way for?" Many of us would have been on the American flight back home to Ur. Finally, when he was 99 years old, God told him he would have a son. Sarah laughed and denied it, and God told her to name him Isaac, which means laughter, and Abraham believed God! Finally, the same voice that told him to leave Ur and that he was going to have a son, told him in Genesis 22 that he was to kill the son as an offering to Jehovah. In Genesis 5:22 Abraham tells the servants at the foot of Mount Moriah to wait there and "WE will worship and return to you." WE will worship? Yes. But how could WE come back? Abraham was fully committed to killing the boy! This act was against every moral principle that God had ever enacted. It was murder, and only practiced by the pagans. Yet, because God spoke, Abraham was willing to kill the boy. Notice that he said, "WE will return to you." How could this be?

Romans 4 speaks of the heart of Abraham and his manner of life. Notice 4:17. He BELIEVED, even God who gives life to the dead (the dead womb of Sarah), and calls into being that which does not exist." (Just as we begin in Mark 11:24, God caused to come into being before it even existed); V. 18, Abraham believed. . . "that which had been spoken;" V. 20, the "promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith;" V. 21 being assured that what He had promised, He was able to perform."

The point of all of this is simply that: Abraham heard the promise of God, (1) I'll take you to a land, (2) I'll deliver you a son to make a nation out of, and (3) you kill him. Nevertheless, Abraham believed the promise so strongly that he knew God would fulfill His promise, even if he killed the boy he loved so very much. That is the power of faith. Moses is an example that Nehemiah uses, as well as others, but space here allows us to use only Abraham to make our point. We pray in faith KNOWING that the promise which God has made will be fulfilled, even as we speak the words. That does not mean the answer is immediate, for Abraham died without inheriting the land. However, the fact that it would be given to his seed was just as sure and certain the moment God spoke it, and Abraham believed it even though it would be hundreds of years later before he would receive this promise.

Our Need For Faith

As we read the book of Acts, we see the power of the New Testament church. First, in growth. They turned civilization upside down. In Acts 5:28 they turned the

City of Jerusalem upside down. Then in Acts 9:31 they turned Palestine upside down, and finally, in Acts 17:6 they were accused of turning the world upside down. Consider that as compared with the impact which we, as 20th century Christians, have made on our world. Next, consider the sacrifice of the first century church. They sold their homes in Acts 4:32. Finally, consider their dedication in the face of imprisonment, beatings and death. Now, what motivated them to do all this? What was the force which propelled this growth, sacrifice and dedication back in their day, when in our day we can't even get members of the Lord's body away from the television set on Sunday night if there is a 4:00 P.M. football game telecast. When we see Bible class teachers take to the woods in droves to hunt all weekend, if it is deer season? Again, how did they succeed and we are failing? The answer lies in one word, FAITH! It was in the power of their faith. This, of course, was no accident because the original 12 disciples were the products of the Lord's earthly training ministry, and what they received from Him they passed on to the large body in the aggregate.

The Development Of This Faith in The 12

When the Lord called the disciples, he called them from their boats and nets, or from the tax-collecting booth, or from whatever occupation they happened to be engaged in for their daily sustenance. They were to leave their wives and families and travel with Him for the next three years. After putting together the body of the 12, He integrated the ministry with the Sermon On The Mount. Then they followed and watched for a year, as they lived hand to mouth and day by day. They saw the dead raised, the blind given sight, the deaf made to hear, and they saw their daily needs cared for without their worrying about them. Finally, the time was right and the 12 disciples became the 12 Apostles in Matt. 10:1 and Mark 6:7, and were sent out two by two in the first Commission. It was limited to the Jews and the instructions were rigid. They were to carry no extra money, no extra staff, no extra sandals. In other words, without any natural provisions whatsoever for this journey. They also had to go out penniless and depend on the Lord to support their needs daily. This was the beginning of the fulfillment in Matt. 6:33 to "seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things will be added to you." This was the Lord's promise and on this limited scale He was going to show them and us that He always keeps his promises! Consider what would be needed to go on this journey. Just as Abraham left Ur with faith in the promise of God, these men started to walk about Galilee with no provisions for their daily needs. How many of us would start out on the Interstate with nothing but one tank of gasoline and a Bible to preach God's truth? Look at what they did. But the hand of the Lord is not short and He was able to keep His promise to care for them. This training exercise was but the beginning of many that build the type of faith in the promises of God that would lead this rag-tag group of disciples to the Roman arena to die for their Master. It was FAITH. That FAITH was transferred to the New Testament

Church so that they would not worry or care about tomorrow either, but only proceed to do His will.

In conclusion brethren, we are impotent today because we have not spent the time in prayer and meditation that we should have and could have spent. Therefore, we do not really know our Lord. We don't know because we have never walked out on the cutting edge of sacrifice and dedication where only He holds the key of life or death. Faith is a stone wall. This is the way that the wall will indeed become a mighty fortress. Nehemiah noted to all of Israel the promises of God. We have noted the promises of God today, and as Nehemiah inferred, if God keeps one promise He will keep all His promises. We need that kind of faith! Without our faith we cannot please Him. Why? Because without it, there will be no prayer, no obedience, no commitment and no sacrifice! **ALL ARE NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO SERVE HIM.**

So, if one prays believing the answer is already given, can he move mountains? Absolutely! That verse means exactly what it says. Abraham's life was far greater than any mountain to be moved as he became the father of a nation that is still with us today. Moses' life was far greater than any mountain ever moved as he was the deliverer who went before the mightiest nation in the world with a shepherd's staff and brought out 4 million slaves that were the economic backbone of that kingdom. He did far greater things than moving mountains, and so did the New Testament disciples, BY FAITH. The next time someone says in Bible class that faith cannot move 20-ft. trees into the sea, or move mountains into the sea, humbly point them to Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament Christians. Nehemiah would, if he were holding a meeting where you preach today.

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PRAYER POSTURE

Several years ago an area author set forth in a tract, **The Posture In Prayer**, the idea "I believe the posture of the body is an index of the attitude of the heart" (page 3), but the scripture that was supposed to teach this was not given in the tract. Again, the reader of the tract was told "I believe a Christian can breathe a prayer as he works on his job, as he drives the highways, or as he lies upon his bed at night; but when he takes a position to pray in public meetings, or before the public, I believe he should kneel before God" (page 5). But again, while the tract mentions Scriptures, it gives no Scripture that teaches the above.

Paul said, in Rom. 10:6-8, "the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." We would like to know where the "word of faith" preached by the Apostles of Christ said one must kneel in prayer in public. Paul further said the 'Spirit of faith' which he had was "according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (2 Cor. 4:13). Where is it written that when one "takes a position to pray in public meetings, or before the public.. he should kneel before God" because the "posture of the body is an index of the attitude of the heart"?

If one wants to believe and practice such, that is fine; but it is an altogether different matter when one thinks the Bible teaches such and leaves the impression with people the Bible teaches these ideas, which it doesn't. If someone wants to kneel, or stand, or sit, or whatever, when they pray, that is fine; for them to try to make the Bible teach any one of these positions to the exclusion of all others, I must take exception.

This tract further teaches there is a difference in "prayer" and "thanks" by quoting a preacher in the last century that said "there is a difference between "giving thanks" and "prayer;" "the latter may include the former, but to give thanks cannot be properly called a prayer" (pages 11-12). As we examine these ideas, it will become clear why the arbitrary distinction is made between "prayer" and "giving thanks."

Men

In Scripture some men are called "elders" (Acts 20:17), called "overseers" (verse 28) and "pastors" (verse 28—"to feed") and these all refer to the same men, but from different points of view.

Prayer

Paul said in 1 Tim. 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men." The tract we are noticing says we are to kneel for public "prayer" and stand for "thanks." What we are to do while involved in "intercessions" and "supplications" we are not told. Does God care about the position of our body during "thanks" and "public prayer" but is not concerned about "intercessions" and "supplications"?

(1) **Prayer.** This is the general word for prayer used in the New Testament. It is "prayer addressed to God" (Thayer, page 545).

(2) **Intercessions.** These are "a petition, supplication. . . used of prayer to God" (Thayer, page 218). In his little tract on the subject of prayer, **What The Bible Says About Prayer**, the late, brother Bennie Lee Fudge defined "intercessions" as "appeal in behalf of others." How often have brethren made an "appeal in behalf of others" for the forgiveness of sins just as Simon asked Peter, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8:24)? Was Simon not asking Peter to "appeal in behalf" of him? What position should Peter have taken to make intercession for Simon?

(3) **Supplications.** Of supplications, brother Fudge defines them as "earnest entreaty." Thayer says "a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty, contextually, of prayer imploring God's aid in some particular matter" (page 126). Paul said, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. . . for this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Was not Paul making an "earnest entreaty" "imploring God's aid in some particular matter"? When Paul made supplication, what position did he get in? If it makes a difference, what verse tells us the supplication position?

(4) **Thanks.** Concerning this brother Fudge defines thanks, as an "expression of gratitude." Thayer says "thankfulness. . . the giving of thanks" (Page 264). Paul wrote the Philippians, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:3-5).

Our tract teaches one should kneel in public prayers and stand for thanks. Paul said "in every prayer of mine" "I thank God for you." How did Paul kneel when he prayed publicly and stand when he gave thanks, and do both at the same time?

Men Divided and Uncertain

To quote men on a religious question is often to find them divided on what to do on one hand, and uncertain on the other.

Our tract quotes J. W. Jackson of the last century as saying in "prayer" it is kneeling and Alexander Campbell is quoted that kneeling is always preferred. Yet, Jesus didn't always kneel because on the cross he prayed "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). If Jesus did not always kneel when he prayed in public, neither must we.

This tract quotes (1) Alexander Campbell as saying when giving "thanks" one "stands" and (2) J. W. Jackson as saying there is "no rule" when one gives "thanks" saying some stood, some kneeled but standing is preferred.

Jesus

While it is true Jesus did kneel in prayer (Lk. 22:41), Jesus did not always kneel (Lk. 23:34). While some say we should stand when giving thanks and others say kneel, we read of Jesus sitting. Jesus "sat down with the twelve" and "gave thanks" (Mt. 26:20, 27; see also Mk. 14:18, 22, 23, and Lk. 22:14,17,19).

One can read that Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15) and that he "did not sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). If Jesus did not always kneel in public prayer, did not stand when he gave thanks and was "without sin" because he "did not sin," then you and I do not have to kneel in public prayer nor stand during thanks. One follows Jesus when he sits during thanks and when he prays publicly without kneeling.

The theory of our tract says one should kneel in public prayer. Yet, an examination of the prayer life of Jesus shows he didn't always kneel in public (Lk. 23:34); and he did sometimes kneel in private (Lk. 22:41-45). "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed." Jesus kneeled when theory says one does not have to kneel; when theory says one should kneel, Jesus didn't. I have never known a theory but what Jesus Christ and His apostles disputed it by their teaching, or their practice, or both.

Jesus Said

In Lk. 18:9-14 Jesus told of two men going up to the temple to **pray**. Both men stood and **prayed**. One man, the Pharisee, "exalted himself" (v. 14) by saying, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (verses 11-12). The other man, the publican, said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (verse 13). Jesus said, of this publican, "this man went down to his house justified" (verse 14). Thus, we have Jesus saying a man (1) **stood** in the temple, thus, in public, (2) **prayed**, and was (3) **justified**. When Jesus said a man stood in public, prayed and is justified, I am content to teach the same thing. Why wouldn't anyone else?

If it be said that "stood" means "take a position" why didn't Jesus say these men "took a position?" The fact that Jesus didn't say these men "took a position" means Jesus didn't intend to convey the idea they just "took a position." He intended to convey they "stood" for that is what he said.

If it be said that Solomon stood on his knees when he prayed at the dedication of the temple, one should understand (1) Old Testament practice is not authority for New Testament worship, (2) Solomon also made supplication when he prayed, so why not contend that one should kneel when they make supplication? (3) If "standing" in prayer is the same as "kneeling," why does the Old Testament text add "on his knees"? If "on his knees" were not added, one would not know that he was on his knees just from the word "stood." When Jesus walked on the water (Mt. 14:25) all understood he walked on his feet for that is the normal way to walk. If one walks on his hands, something from the context must indicate it, otherwise one would gather that he walked on his feet for that is the usual and normal way to walk. (4) If Solomon standing on his knees is authority for New Testament worship, why do not people stand on both knees? Solomon did. Why can one stand on just one knee when Solomon stood on both? Solomon also prayed "with his hands spread up to heaven" (1 Kgs. 8:54). If one uses Solomon as authority for kneeling in prayer today, why not for spreading both hands toward heaven when they pray? If one is going to use Solomon as authority for kneeling in prayer today, why not use him for both (1) kneeling in prayer on both knees and at the same time for (2) spreading the hands out toward heaven? If Solomon is our authority, why not take him for our authority all the way?

Rule Exploded

From this tract we learn one is supposed to **kneel in prayer and stand to give thanks**. A look at some Bible passages will now show that is not what was done in the Bible.

In **prayer**, (1) Hannah **stood** (1 Sam. 1:9, 10, 26), (2) David **sat** (2 Sam. 7:18), (3) Jesus **fell on his face** (Mt. 26:39), and (4) Jesus said stand (Mk. 11:25). This shows one does not have to kneel to pray.

When giving **thanks**, (1) Daniel **kneeled** (Dan. 6:10), (2) a leper **fell on his face** to thank Jesus (Lk. 17:16) and (3) Jesus **sat down** (Lk. 22:14-19).

Now if the rule is kneel to pray and stand to give thanks, if I can find one exception to this and the exception is pleasing to God, I have destroyed the theory. Let me illustrate; faith plus baptism equals salvation (Mk. 16:15-16). Jesus said this. Now if I can find an exception to this, then the rule is invalid. If I can find one having faith without baptism being saved in the New Testament, then I have destroyed the rule of Mark 16:15-16. I search the New Testament completely and can not find an exception to the rule of Mark 16:15-16; therefore Mark 16:15-16 stands. I search the Bible through and find exceptions to the rule that one must kneel in public prayer and stand to give thanks. Therefore, I know such is a human rule.

Our tract quotes A. Campbell as saying "Kneeling in prayer is always to be preferred, if it can be made convenient. Imagine a gospel preacher saying "Immersion in baptism is always to be preferred, if it can be made convenient."

A question is raised in the tract: "I wonder if those preachers who teach there is nothing in the posture of prayer ever have prayed in their homes, and if so, do they sit in their seats, before their children, to pray to the eternal God?" Now if kneeling in prayer is only necessary in public, there is nothing wrong with not kneeling in the privacy of your home. If one must kneel in the privacy of the home, then it is not public prayer in which one must kneel, but all prayer. Which is it?

In our tract J. W. Jackson is quoted as saying, "But says one, if we must kneel in offering prayer, then no prayer is acceptable unless offered in that posture? We do not offer such a negative, but only affirm that according to all common sense rules of exegesis we have authority of the Lord Jesus Christ for "kneeling in prayer". If all that is insisted is that one has authority to kneel, no one I know would object. Our objection is that when whatever is said leaves the impression that the only scriptural position for public prayer is kneeling, that is a thing the Bible does not say.

When one considers the evidence from the word of God, there are several positions not just one that the Bible sets forth. (7) There is standing (1 Sam. 1:9, 10, 26; Mk. 11:25), (2) standing, with head bowed (Lk. 18:13), (3) standing, hands spread (1 Kgs. 8:22), (4) Bowed heads (Gen. 24:48; Ex. 12:27; 2 Ch. 29:30), (5) Bowed heads, uplifted hands (Neh. 8:20), (6) Kneeling (2 Ch. 6:13; Psm. 95:6; Lk. 22:41), (7) hands spread and/or uplifted (Psm. 141:2; Isa. 1:15; Lk. 24:50), (8) Uplifted eyes (Psm. 121:1; 123:1; John 11:41; 17:1), (9) falling down, face on the ground (Dt. 9:18, 25, 26; Josh. 5:14; Lk. 17:16).

Out of all of these why one would pick just one and try to bind it as the one exclusive position for public prayer is hard to understand. Why pick kneeling? Why not pick out falling down with ones face on the ground or standing with bowed head?

That one may scripturally kneel in public prayer, or any other, none deny. To try to make kneeling the one exclusive position taught in the Scriptures is to teach that which the Bible does not.

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"PROVE ALL THINGS"

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Sandwiched between the exhortations to not despise prophesyings and to abstain from all appearance of evil is the urging: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21, 20,22). The phrase *panta de dokimazete* (prove all things) is of the utmost importance and yet, as we shall see, is one of the most neglected commands in the New Testament. The verb *dokimazo* (prove) is defined, "To test, prove, with the expectation of approving. . .," **Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words**. *Dokimazo* is translated "discern" in Luke 12:56; "approve," Rom. 2:18; "examine," I Cor. 11:28; and "trieth," in I Thes. 2:4 (KJV).

The command, intelligent reader, to "prove all things" presupposes a standard or means to prove or establish. Many in the early church enjoyed the ability to miraculously ascertain the truthfulness of what was being presented through the gift of "discerning of spirits" (I Cor. 13:8-10, cf. Jas. 1:25). The means, I submit, by which we can "prove all things" is the gospel of Christ. "But when I saw," Paul writes concerning the hypocritical conduct of Peter and others, "that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. . ." (Gal. 2:14). Paul was able to determine the correctness or incorrectness of their behavior by the "truth of the gospel" (cf. John 12:48, 2 Tim. 3:16,17, and Jude 3). Hence, God's word (New Testament) is the standard or criterion which we must use in "proving all things."

WE MUST PROVE ALL THINGS IN DOCTRINAL MATTERS. The truth is essential and necessary to salvation (Jn. 8:32; Rom. 2:6-9; Acts 17:11). It behooves us, therefore, to prove or establish what is truth. Regarding the plan of salvation for the alien we must, by the scriptures, prove what is required. When one searches the New Testament one will find involved in the plan of salvation the matter of belief (Jn. 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of Christ's deity (Rom. 10:10), and water baptism for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38).

When we examine the word of God relative to Jesus' church we discover and "prove" that Jesus did build his church (Acts 2:47); there is only one body or church (Eph. 4:4, cf. 1:22, 23); she wore designations which honored her owner (I Cor. 1:2, Rom. 16:16); salvation is in Christ or his spiritual body, the church (Eph. 1:3, 2 Tim. 2:10); and we gain entrance into that body through or by water baptism (Rom. 6:3, I Cor. 12:13, and Gal. 3:27).

As we seek to "prove all things" we find that the Christian has duties enjoined upon him: attendance (Heb. 10:25), prayer (I Thes. 5:17), teaching others (Heb. 5:11-14), pure speech (Eph. 4:29), and holiness of life (2 Cor. 7:1).

Also, concerned reader, keep in mind the purpose of our proving: "To test, prove, **with the expectation of approving..**" (all emphasis mine, dm). We are not to examine doctrine with the object of **disproving** but with the design of **approving!** About the only time some study God's word is when they want to disprove a matter. (Of course, in primarily studying to establish truth we also, in the process, establish error.)

PROOF IN GENERAL. I do not believe we are abusing the command to "prove all things" by generally and broadly applying it. When you have people, you are going to have problems. People are going to be envious and spiteful one of another. Some, then, are going to seek to ruin others through accusations and slander. What guide or preventive is there against such? "Prove all things." Churches are being needlessly divided and troubled because the instruction to "prove all things" is being neglected. Under the law of Moses **proof** was required before charges could be established (cf. Deut. 19:15; 17:6). Beloved, we find the same teaching in the New Testament. Regarding accusing an elder Paul instructed "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three

witnesses" (I Tim. 5:19). Elders and all who are "public," such as preachers, are subject to character assassination. However, to "prove all things" the accusers must have solid proof (witnesses). Consider all the problems which would be averted and solved if the procedure of Matthew 18:15-17 were always followed.

Friend, **require** proof. In doctrinal matters, have every tenet firmly established by God's word. Regarding proof in general, demand that everything be unquestionably substantiated. After you have positively determined truth, tenaciously hold to it: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

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FIELD REPORTS

JAMES C. JONES, P.O. Box 348, Standish, ME 04084. August 15, 1982 marks the conclusion of our twelfth year with the Lord's church in the Portland, Maine metro area. Lord willing, we have no plans to leave. We have been meeting in our building in Scarborough for three and a half years. Three people have been baptized into Christ since January 1st. Virtually every family here prepares for and engages in home Bible studies with non-Christians. We are bound together in love and unity. Attendance on Sunday averages 25-30 with the contribution averaging \$185 per week. We look forward to having Bro. Ralph Smart, formerly of Bangor, join us in the work here around October. Please note our ad with directions to the building and worship with us when you are in northern New England.

P.J. CASEBOLT, 313 S. 4th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159. During the winter months I preached for the Northeast church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida and I enjoyed the work with this good congregation. Since April 1, I have been working with the church at Fly, Ohio, and conducting meetings in the area. Beginning the first of November, I shall work once again with the congregation at 210 Cedar Ave. in Moundsville, West Virginia.

J.T. SMITH, 14250 N. Miami Ave., Miami, FL 33168. In my July meetings some unusual things happened. The first week in July I was in a meeting with the Riverside church near Booneville, Kentucky. Brother Gary Marshall is the preacher there. He, and a number of other brethren in that area have done a great deal of work, much of it by riding motorcycles in to places where they

cannot go in automobiles, and having classes with people and inviting them to come to the services. As a result of this, one fine man, who was an elder in the Presbyterian church, along with a part of his family, have been converted to the truth. During the meeting with everyone working, we had every seat filled, with a total of 94 present. During the meeting we had a presbyterian elder, and a number of people who were members of denominational churches present, including a Baptist preacher and his wife. Since I left, I understand the Baptist preacher is circulating a letter trying to get brother Marshall run out of the county for "bringing a fellow like Smith to this county to hold a revival," Methinks brother Marshall won't run. Two were baptized during that meeting.

Then the third week in July, I was with the Spring Warrior congregation near Perry, Florida. Brother Gary Hargis is the preacher there, and everyone who knows Gary knows that lots of personal contacts are going to be made whether a meeting is going on or not. On Sunday, the first day of the meeting, we broke an attendance record with 142 present, with 24 visitors from the community. Then on Thursday evening, after having announced all week that the lesson would be on Divorce and Remarriage, the attendance record of the past Sunday was broken again with 160 present. This necessitated some extra chairs. Three were baptized during the meeting, one more on Saturday after the meeting, and two more on the Sunday following. I am sure, after becoming acquainted with the brethren there, that they, along with Gary and his family, will reach many more souls for Christ.

FERRELL JENKINS, 9211 Hollyridge PL, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. Earlier this year I was sought out and challenged to a debate

by Randy Vining, an Unitarian-Universalist minister. The debate on the topic "Is Christianity Credible?" was conducted at their building on April 25, 1982. Vining styles himself as an agnostic and an apostle of non-belief. The 75 minute discussion is available on cassette tape from The Spoken Word, P.O. Box 127, Greenville, IN 47124 for \$3.98.

After three years of work with the Temple Terrace church in a special teaching program I have begun preaching for the Carrollwood church of Christ, 13345 Casey Rd., Tampa, FL 33688. Due to efforts of others, the differences that once existed with the Seminole church have now been resolved. For this we thank God. My work as a Bible professor at Florida College, conducting tours, and holding meetings continues as usual.

ROY FUDGE, 1402 Buchanan, Corinth, MS 38834. On July 23rd my wife and I flew to Portland, Oregon where our son Raymond and his family met us. I was there to conduct a meeting at White Salmon, Washington. The church there is composed of six families with a membership of fourteen. It was a very enjoyable meeting. One night there were more than forty present. We had visitors from as far away as seventy miles as well as from the community. The church meets in the community building on Suncay at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Their mid-week service is on Tuesday evening. They would be happy to have any traveling in that area to stop and worship with them. The members there seem to be very close and show much interest in the work. Three men share the preaching. Interest was good and we hope there will be results from it. The work here in Corinth goes on in an encouraging way. We appreciate the privilege of working with dedicated members. When in the area, plan to worship with us here at Meeks St.

LARRY DEVORE, 7872 Cleveland Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Since my last report in STS, I have kept one or more preaching appointments at the following places: Berea, Dover, Mt. Zion (near Wooster), Perrysville, and Burbank Rd., in Wooster, all in Ohio. On June 25th, it was my honor to unite in marriage our daughter, Kimberly, to Craig Meyer, the preacher at Burbank Rd. church in Wooster. On July 11th, it was my privilege to baptize our oldest son, James, into Christ. I have some time open for Lord's Day preaching appointments. If I can be of service, call me at (216) 345-5330.

GARY COLES, 403 E. Parkview Ct., Round Lake Park, IL 60073. Things have been going very well at Hainesville Rd. In the past two years there have been thirty baptized, eighteen restored, and six to place membership. In one week this past June we broke all records for every service. Our attendance has been averaging in the mid 80's and our contribution has been averaging around \$700 per week. The consistency of attendance at all the services has been encouraging. There have been times when the Wednesday night crowd exceeded Sunday morning's. I must commend the brethren here for their willingness to get involved in personal work. There have been occasions when we have had as many as eight personal work classes in progress each week. Recently a Men's Bible Study Class was started and this September a Ladies Bible Class is scheduled to commence. In addition to this, there are several other specialized classes on the drawing board. Hainesville Rd. is by no means perfect and has her share of short-comings. However, if the forward momentum continues I feel she is in store for a very bright future.

WENDELL M. POWELL, 6 Sth Winds, St., St. Peters, MO 63376. As of August 16th I began working with the good church that meets in St. Peters, MO. If you are ever in the St. Louis area, drive out a few miles and be with us. The church building is located just a few miles off I-70W. We are looking forward to several years of good and happy work with the brethren. The church is at peace, and ALL are interested in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

PEDRO RAMIREZ, P.O. Box 21, Douglas, AZ 85607. Since my last report there have been two baptisms at Agua Prieta, Mexico just across the border from Douglas, Arizona. We continue to have visitors at all of our services. Please pray for us. Also I have lost some support recently and need to make this up if possible.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C. 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. It is a privilege for me to share with you the good things that God has done with us. To find people who are always interested in the truth is not always easy. However, there are people who are thinking about spiritual things. We contacted six people who had the disposition to study the scriptures. Our study lasted for two to three months. On Sunday, June 6th when we offered the invitation, these six responded to be baptized. It was a special day for the church here. I will be going to Chile soon to do some preaching among three different congregations who have invited me. Please remember us in South America.

KENTUCKY DEBATE

JIMMY THOMAS, P.O. Box 746, Clintwood, VA 24228. Olan Hicks of Searcy, Arkansas and Rick King of Cromona, Kentucky have scheduled a public debate to be conducted October 25, 26, 28, 29 in the circuit courtroom of the Pike County courthouse in Pikeville, Kentucky. Sessions are to begin at 7:30 each evening. The propositions are as follows:

1. The scriptures teach that one who puts away his mate and marries another, except for fornication, continues to commit adultery as long as he lives with the second mate.
Affirm: Rick King Deny: Olan Hicks
 2. The scriptures teach that couples who commit adultery by unscripturally divorcing and remarrying may be forgiven of that adultery without separating.
Affirm: Olan Hicks Deny: Rick King
- Motel accommodations are available in town and at nearby Breaks Interstate Park.

CHRISTIANS IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK?

BILL HALL, Jordan Ontario LOR ISO. We are hoping to begin a Bible class in Rochester, New York soon. We would appreciate it if any of the readers of STS could provide any information concerning Christians in that area or interested individuals. Information should be sent to Bruce Bakker, 439 Kilbourn Rd., Rochester, NY 14618.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

FORT WORTH, TX—The North Fort Worth church of Christ began to meet in April of this year with attendance averaging in the 60's. Since that time the attendance has averaged in the 80's. All of the families, except one couple from the Castleberry church, have come from the Haltom City church. Approximately 80 of the members live north of Loop 820 which encircles Fort Worth. This work has been in the planning stages for some time. Land is available for our use in the Summerfield subdivision on North Beech St. about two miles north of Loop 820. Currently we are meeting in a rented building off North Beech St. about two miles south of Loop 820. The address is 4112A Garland St. The Summerfield area is a growing area. There is presently no church of any kind in this area, and extensive door-to-door canvassing has already begun. At least four home studies are already underway with one couple from the area already baptized. If you know of any in the area that might be contacted for study or information, please let us know. Robert Gabhart began to preach for us on June 6, after eight years with the Haltom City church. His number is (817) 282-7996. You may also contact Jim Hendrick at 232-5287, Bob Jobe at 485-0070, and Dwyane Davis at 232-1477. Bro. Gabhart's address is 1302 Driftwood Dr., Euless, TX 76039.

WACO, TX—There is a new congregation in Waco meeting at 3017 Parrott St. Services are on Sunday at 10 and 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday evening Bible Study is at 7:30. Bro. Ray Mayse is the preacher. You may contact him at (817) 752-0071.

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