

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"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

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DO THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD GO DIRECTLY TO HEAVEN?

Peter spoke of David on the day of Pentecost and said, "For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). He was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), and one whose throne was given to Christ, had been dead for hundreds of years, yet Peter said he had not entered into the heavens.

Are the righteous dead, such as Abraham, David and Lazarus, still in hades where Christ was during the three days his body was in the grave? Or have they at some time after the resurrection of Christ been transferred into heaven?

If the righteous dead go directly to heaven, why take them out of heaven and give them a body, bring them before the judgment and then send them back to heaven? Are there two stages of heaven, one without a resurrected body, and the other with a spiritual body? Why have a judgment for those who have already received their ultimate reward in heaven? Precisely when does one inherit eternal life? Does he go to heaven before he receives eternal life, or does one receive eternal life before the resurrection and the judgment? These questions must be answered in harmony with the scriptures.

We are told that Paul said to be "absent from the body" is to "be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). We can not put a construction on Paul's statement that would put it in conflict with Peter on Pentecost and Jesus' statement in John 14:1-3. "To be present with the Lord" simply means to be in the care and keeping of the

Lord. If this is not the meaning, all the dead are now in heaven because Solomon said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). If the spirit goes to God, and God dwells in heaven, it must follow that all spirits that leave the body go to heaven where God is. Obviously, the meaning is that the spirit returns to the keeping of God in whatever place He prepares for the disembodied spirits of men.

The spirit of Jesus went into the hands of God while his body went to the grave. He cried from the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and he died. (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:46). Stephen expected the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit as he was dying (Acts 7:59). But when Jesus' spirit went into the hands of God, he went to hades, to paradise where he said the thief would be with him. After Jesus arose from the dead, his spirit returned from the hands of his Father, he told the woman at his tomb not to touch him for he had not yet ascended to his Father.

In view of the fact that David had not ascended into the heavens at the time Peter made the statement on Pentecost, and in view of Solomon's statement that the spirit which leaves the body goes back to God, and in view of the statement of Jesus that he had gone to prepare a place, and would come again and receive his disciples to be where he was, it follows that Paul's statement that to "be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" does not mean to enter the mansions in preparation by the Lord. It means the spirit is away from this life and in the keeping of the Lord to await the resurrection and judgment.

Furthermore, the divine record of the crucifixion of Christ gives the account of Jesus' statement to the penitent thief on the cross. He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). These obvious facts can be drawn from this statement:

1) Jesus and the thief were together on the cross that day. They were within talking distance of each other. At the time of their conversation the body and spirit of both were intact: they were both alive. But both died that day—the spirit of both left the body.

2) They were never together in the tomb. Jesus was

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Editorial

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AN APPEAL TO FOREIGN WORKERS

Those of us who publish periodicals are often called upon to make known worthy appeals for brethren who labor in foreign lands, or difficult areas of this country where there are few churches. During the years this paper has been in business, we have devoted considerable space to just such news. I have tried to caution and make appeals only for those cases where there was reasonable evidence to indicate the people involved were worthy. Sometimes it has been necessary to rely on information from those we have every reason to trust. In many instances, we have had personal knowledge on which to base our efforts.

This is always treacherous ground. The urgency of gospel work everywhere in the world weighs heavily on the consciences of those of us who preach the gospel, and especially on some of us who have had a part, at one time or another, in some of this work. Over the years I have written many letters, articles and news items in an attempt to inform brethren of the needs of worthy men. For the most part there is reason to feel good about these efforts. There are some good, devoted brethren scattered around the globe who truly have the best interests of the kingdom of God at heart. These include Americans sent and supported by American churches, and also native men who labor in their own lands among their own people.

But it is a sad fact, that all such appeals are not worthy. Time and circumstances sometimes make it clear that some are working for the "loaves and fishes." There have been some men who have never succeeded in any work they have attempted who decide to go overseas and preach. They won't do any better there than here. Men who can't even master the basic elements of their own mother tongue will make a total fiasco out of learning to speak and write in another language. Some men are petty and dwell on little offenses (whether imagined or real). Sometimes they can't get along with other brethren or with their own families. They magnify grievances, inject them into the church with the result that other brethren feel compelled to "choose up sides" and then seek to enlist the support of brethren here who support them. Jealous men will sometimes make accusations against fellow workers and try to get their support cut off. Brethren here scratch their heads and agonize about what to do.

Those of us who have stuck our necks out to help a brother in a far-away place are sometimes made to feel as though we had a knife stuck in our backs by the very ones we have worked the hardest to help. It not only leaves egg on our faces, it seriously tarnishes our credibility. The next time we go to bat to help a brother, however deserving he may be, our appeals are taken much less seriously. The end result is that we find it harder and harder to support foreign workers. There was a time, a few years ago, when you could write a letter, an article, or make a speech about the work in some corner of the world where you had personal contacts, and brethren were eager to help. **Not any more.** I have noticed a continually lessening interest in supporting men in foreign lands in the last few years. Some churches have been badly burned with men who turned out to be unsound in the faith, immoral in personal life, or so cantankerous in inter-personal relations with brethren that they were left with no choice but to stop supporting them.

Some Helpful Suggestions

Brethren who plan to go to some needy field in this country or to some foreign land to preach would do well to ponder the following suggestions:

(1) Don't ask for more support than you need. Be realistic and do your homework. You must have enough to enable you to live in the economy where you are going. If you need more than appears normal to brethren here, be sure to explain to them the difference in economies.

(2) If you are contacting brethren who do not know you, be sure to give references with whom they can consult as to your worthiness and aptitude for the work. Brethren who do not know you do not owe you anything just because you wrote them a letter or made a phone call.

(3) Make full disclosure of the amounts and sources of all support you receive to every place which supports you. Once or twice a year is not enough. If they supply you with monthly support, then YOU supply them with a monthly report of your work, including an account of support and the places providing it. Any man who is unwilling to do this does not deserve to be supported.

(4) Keep the brethren abreast of your work. Tell them about baptisms, of course. But also tell them about your efforts to teach classes and other teaching opportunities you have. Keep them informed about problems you encounter. Ask for their prayers for specific problems in your work.

(5) If you have a disagreement with another preacher and his family in the area of your work, please don't become the ring leader of a faction nor expect brethren who support you to have all the facts in the case and to automatically take your side. Acquit yourself as a man, not as a little boy who pouts.

(6) Don't make every report an urgent appeal for extra money for first one thing and then another. Some brethren in the Philippines, Nigeria, and other places, against all advice, have filled reports with appeals for money to pay someone's Doctor bill, to buy a loud speaker, a motorcycle, a typewriter, or to put a child through

college. When every report becomes an appeal for more and more money, then don't be surprised if brethren grow weary and decide that you are not honest.

(7) Do everything you can, in your teaching, to help the brethren where you work to be self-reliant and to work toward the time they can be self-supporting.

(8) Plant and water and leave the increase to the Lord and forget about who gets the credit.

(9) If your presence in some field contributes to strife and confusion in the work, then come home and stop accepting support from brethren for you to sow discord and destroy the work of God.

ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

It is scripturally right for brethren to recommend brethren they know to those who do not know them or who are not sure about them. Thus, Barnabas vouched for Paul in Acts 9:26-29. Paul wrote commendations of Timothy, Titus, Silas, Luke and others. But it is certainly possible for us to misjudge those we think we know well. If you have evidence that a brother is not worthy and he gives your name for a reference, please be truthful when approached by brethren who are trying to gather the best information they can upon which to form a judgment. A Filipino preacher in Zamboanga has widely circulated a letter using my name in such a way as to imply endorsement. Last year he wrote a bleeding-heart letter in which he told how he and his family were burned out by Muslim rebels and forced to flee for safety in the night with only the clothes they were wearing. Somehow, though, he managed to salvage writing materials and a large collection of names and addresses of American churches to whom he sent his letter. This same fellow was caught accepting much more support than he was reporting, including \$150 a month from a liberal church in Oklahoma, which had no idea he was accepting support from "antis." I have photo copies of the cancelled checks provided to me by the preacher of that Oklahoma church. The same Zamboanga preacher has another letter out this year (the first one was dated in February, 1986) in which, this time, he has lost all and had to flee before the New People's Army. But he still salvaged all his names and addresses. I have had 30 long distance phone calls about this man and have answered 15 letters about him, plus numerous personal inquiries during meetings in various parts of the country. I have done my best to warn brethren about him.

It is dangerous to recommend men for support when they have just left some system of error. Hastily gathered support may be totally justified in some cases, but it is easy to leave the door open to tempt dishonest men who "change" not out of conviction of truth, but as a means of gain. Why not give a man time to get the error out of his system and to show the genuineness of his conviction by sacrificially standing for the truth, even if he has to support his family at whatever honest work he can perform. When the time is right, a Barnabas will come to Tarsus and get you and introduce you to brethren who will stand behind you at an Antioch or elsewhere.

None of this has been meant to discourage honest, hard working gospel preachers who labor in the distant

fields of earth. But it is meant as a message for those who would use us to their own advantage and then stick a knife in our backs by betraying well-meant efforts to help them. Such men hinder gospel work all over the world because they cause sincere brethren to be suspicious of foreign work. It would be money well spent for churches to send one or more of the elders to visit men they support in distant places, not to meddle in local autonomy, but to provide on-site information for the congregation supporting such workers. Meanwhile, we dare not forget that the field in which the good seed must be sown in the world, the whole world. We must work while it is day.

(Continued from page 1)

buried in a new tomb wherein never man was laid (Matthew 27:58-60); Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-42). The thief was not buried with Christ. Hence, the statement of Jesus to the thief that he would be with him that day did not have reference to the tomb.

3) The language of Jesus had to refer to their spirits which were in paradise that day. It follows therefore that the spirits of both men were together that day in paradise while their bodies were in separate tombs.

But three days later Jesus arose from the dead. He told the woman at the sepulchre, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). God dwells in heaven (11 Chronicles 6:33). Therefore, for the three days Christ was in paradise, he had not ascended to heaven. This is conclusive proof that paradise is not heaven, and the spirits of the dead do not go directly to heaven, even if absolutely sinless as was Christ.

What is paradise? The primary sense is "a garden" and usually the understanding is that it is beautiful and restful. Peter spoke of the place where Jesus was when he was with the thief in paradise. "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). This teaches that the body of Jesus was not left in the tomb to decay, and his soul was not left in the tomb to decay, and his soul was not left in hades. Christ went to paradise the day he died (Luke 23:43); his soul was not left in hades, but was raised from the dead on the third day (Acts 2:27); he said he had not ascended to his Father who is in heaven (John 20:17). Hades therefore is not heaven.

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AND TELL THE
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LET'S HEAR IT FOR GOOD NEWS!

I'm all for good news—and the news I'm hearing from across the country in regard to the growth of the Lord's church is extremely encouraging. For example, just a few years ago I would have been hard pressed to name very many congregations numbering 300 or better. Today I know of several (and some in the 400-500 range). Not long ago the discouraging reports of dwindling groups occupying large buildings that once housed thriving congregations were numerous. Today in many places brethren are having to build on, add on and plan for future expansion of present facilities because of rapid growth. A Seattle area church recently purchased a building from a denominational group that was not smaller in size from their previous facility but much larger due to their recent growth. A Florida elder was lamenting the fact that his city had only approved an auditorium capacity of 450 for their new building, a size he considered too small in view of their current progress. A fellow gospel preacher told me that in recent meetings he has spoken to crowds in excess of 500 several times.

And... baptistries are in use again! I recently talked with an elder of a Mississippi church numbering in the 130's who told of 26 baptisms there last year. A preacher just back from a mid-west meeting spoke excitedly of 11 responses to the Gospel during the week. And these are not isolated reports. They are being echoed in virtually every part of the country. There are churches in the deep south which are growing again. The great northwest is finding the harvest ripe. Southern California is a virtual gold mine of people being receptive to the Master's message. Churches located in college towns are finding quality young people who are reaching out to their classmates with the Gospel. Churches in the mid-Atlantic and northeast areas are prospering as well as those in the mid-west. And godly elders with futuristic vision seem to be on the increase.

Is it just I, or do you feel it, too? Sure, there are always going to be folks who thrive on rampant inactivity and who sound a sour note at the slightest hint of spiritual progress. The suspicious ring of—"nobody baptizes that many people without doing something unscriptural" will, I suppose, always be heard. And, that is not to say that there isn't a danger in becoming so enthusiastic about growth that we lose sight of the need to adhere strictly to the New Testament pattern. We must always heed warnings and we must always watch.

The "75" Mentality

I once heard a brother remark: "*The day this church reaches 75 it'll be time to split off and start a new work.*" Can you believe that? Now I suppose in a few cases the above viewpoint might be wise (although probably very few!) yet, that way of thinking seems to permeate a good many people. It's as if "the church has to be small to be sound." Let me state very frankly—I do not believe that! And (for fear that someone may take this and scamper off down the road of the ridiculous) let me hasten to say that I see a lot of great small churches which are great because they are filled with great people who love the Lord and who are doing the best they can with what they have. I love that and always come away encouraged at the sight of such loyal devotion amidst difficult circumstances. Nothing I say is to minimize that nor is it to argue that God puts a premium on numbers. He doesn't. And, yet, numbers represent people and people represent souls—and folks, there just seems to be more souls lining up behind the Cross! And I'm thrilled about that. That's not just good news—it's GREAT news!

And so let me say a word on behalf of larger churches. I believe with all my heart that God intends for every congregation to grow, to reach out to the lost, to become self-supporting and to ring out the message in other places. We need to go back to Luke's workbook on the *Acts of the Apostles* and see that, for the most part, New Testament churches were large, evangelistic and growth oriented. (I don't see any of the "status quo" stuff in Acts, do you?)

For example, take the church in **Antioch of Syria**. The Scripture says that the church began after "*a large number of them believed and turned to the Lord*" (11:21). Barnabas was one of the first preachers at Antioch and Luke reports that through his efforts at preaching the Gospel "*considerable numbers were brought to the Lord*" (11:24). Barnabas was so encouraged at Antioch's potential that he brought Paul to Antioch (11:25-26). Hence, here is a New Testament congregation that had two preachers working at the same place for at least one year. In 13:1 Luke reports that the Antioch church had five preachers! Chapter 13 tells how they were able to send two of them (Paul and Barnabas) away to preach in other places and in 14: 26-27 we see them return again to Antioch to present a full report to the congregation concerning the work that they had accomplished. And chapter 14 ends with Luke's comment that "*they (Paul and Barnabas) spent a long time with the disciples.*"

What do we have in the New Testament church at Antioch? They were large in number. They had a proficient teaching program (who would deny that?). They sent out preachers from there to preach in other places. They maintained a close relationship with the preachers they sent out. They baptized considerable numbers. They were benevolent (11:27-30). They were not afraid to stand up and oppose error (15: 1-3). They were a zealous group of disciples who rejoiced that they could be called "Christians"—*first in Antioch*. What a strong and sound church! And one can only wonder how many other places were touched with the Gospel message because of Antioch's zeal and commitment to Christ.

Or... study the church in Thessalonica. Or how about the Jerusalem church—which, by the way, grew to over 5,000 (counting men only). Why to suggest that a congregation today should set its sights on just one fifth of that number would bring instant criticism from some. Why is it so? We need to go back to the Book of Acts and see that many of the New Testament churches grew to considerable size and because they were large numerically they were able to have more resources, develop more talent, raise up more spiritual leaders, train more preachers, and spend more money to help spread the Gospel throughout the first century world. I thank God for their example!

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Lord's church hasn't experienced the kind of growth it has in years past is because (and this is just one man's opinion) in far too many places the "75 mentality" has been exercised and brethren have split and splintered and swarmed to start new works with only a handful of folks who were totally unprepared to assume the reins of spiritual leadership and motivation. And, thus, rather than one church beginning to reach it's potential and become self-supporting and develop a vibrant teaching program and appoint elders and generate enthusiasm in the community—there are now two churches—both of which are not self-supporting, without elders and struggling to get by financially. I can't make any sense out of it, can you?

And, while we are on the subject, the old song that says—*"larger churches aren't as friendly as smaller churches"* is just not so. I've been in some very unfriendly smaller congregations as well as some exemplary friendly ones. And I've seen some larger churches that were cold and indifferent toward strangers as well as some that would hardly let you get away without showering you with acts of kindness and hospitality. People are people. Some are cold and clannish while others are warm and loving. I fail to see that the size of a group has anything whatsoever to do with it.

The good news is that churches seem to be growing again and I'm excited about that. (Can you tell?) For too long some have wallowed in a puddle of self-pity and pessimism that said (without saying): *"we're anties, we weren't meant to grow, we're supposed to be small and against everything."* BALONEY! Let's stick with Scripture, and be determined to be and to do EVERYTHING the Lord requires with a spirit of enthusiasm and joy. And that includes telling their friends and neighbors, relatives and business associates the "good news" of Jesus Christ and how they, too, can be part of a New Testament church.

"So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily" (Acts 16:5).

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ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

The disciples made a request, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Jesus not only taught his disciples by a model prayer or by teaching them about prayer, but he also taught them by his example of praying. We can learn better how to pray by studying the prayers in the Bible. There are a number of prayers recorded in the Bible. These were offered at different times and under different circumstances. These prayers were not empty with useless words, but usually were pointed and short. "Prayers, to the patriarchs and prophets, were more than the recital of well-known and well-worn phrases—it was the outpouring of the heart" (Herbert Lockyer, *All The Prayers Of The Bible*, p. 17).

Nothing could be more instructive than to study the prayers that pleased God. Our intention is to look at a number of examples of prayers. Some of the passages we will notice are prayers. Others will be talking about someone praying. Space will not permit us to look in detail at each one. Our purpose is to give the references and make a few brief comments. This study will serve as a summary and conclusion to our series on prayer.

Prayers Of Jesus

(1) **The model prayer** (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4). (2) **At his baptism** (Luke 3:21-22). It is most appropriate to pray when one is baptized. New converts should be taught from that point how to pray. (3) **In Solitude** (Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:15-16). What better way to begin the day than as Jesus did in prayer? If the Son of God needed to pray how much more do we need to? We must find the quiet time to talk to our creator. I am bothered no little by those brethren who don't see much need for praying. (4) **Before choosing the twelve** (Luke 6:12-16). How practical it is to pray when faced with a major decision. (5) **On the mount of transfiguration** (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-35). In order to truly see the glory of God we must climb the mountain of prayer. "Communion with God issues ever in a transfigured life" (G. Campbell Morgan). (6) **Praise and thanks to God** (Luke 10:21; John 11:41-42). We are very quick to ask, but do we thank God when we receive? (7) **For Peter** (Luke 22:31-32). We should pray for those who are weak. How encouraging it is to others to tell them you pray for them. (8) **In anguish** (John 12:27, 28). While we should pray when we have troubles, that is not the only time we should pray. Neither should prayer be a last resort. (9) **For unity**

(John 17). In this prayer Jesus prayed for himself (vs. 1-5), for his disciples (vs. 6-19) and for the disciples of all ages (vs. 20-26). From this we learn that we should continually pray for unity. Thank God for the peace and unity in the local congregation and pray that it will continue. If there is division, pray that unity may be attained. (10) **In Gethsemane** (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46). These prayer were short. They were about trials he was to face. Yet, he prayed that God's will be done. (11) On the cross. He prayed for those that crucified him (Luke 23:34). Shouldn't we too pray for our enemies? He made an inquiry to the Father (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). He commended his Spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46).

Other Prayers

(1) **Abraham prayed for Sodom** (Gen. 18:23-33). (2) **Abraham's servant** offered a prayer for finding a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:12-14). (3) **Isaac** prayed for his barren wife (Gen. 25:21). (4) **Moses** prayed for Israel (Exo. 32:9-14, 30-34; 33:12-13; Num. 21:7-9). (5) **Hannah** prayed for a child (1 Sam. 1:10-13). This was a silent prayer. (6) **David** prayed for his sick child (2 Sam. 12:15-16), offered praise and made request (Psa. 86:43). He prayed about giving to the Lord (1 Chron. 29:10-19). It is very appropriate to pray just before the contribution. Praise and thank God for the blessings we have. Pray that the money will be used to the praise and glory of God. (7) **Solomon** prayed at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:23-54). (8) **Elijah** prayed that it might not rain and then that it would (Jas. 5:17-18). He prayed for fire to come upon the sacrifice (1 Kings 18:36-37). (9) **Hezekiah** prayed for deliverance (2 Kings 19:14-19). (10) **Ezra** prayed for the sins of the people (Ezra 9:5-15). (11) **Job** prayed for his friends (Job 42:10). (12) **Jeremiah** offered praise unto God (Jer. 32:16-25). (13) **Daniel** prayed three times a day (Dan. 6:10). He made confession and prayed for forgiveness (Dan. 9:3-20). (14) **Jonah** prayed while in the whale's belly (Jonah 2:1-10).

The Apostle Paul

Saul of Tarsus was praying when Ananias came to him (Acts 9:11; 22). He prayed when in prison (Acts 16:25). He prayed with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:36). He offered thanks for food (Acts 27:34-35). He always prayed for his brethren. He thanked God for them and prayed for their growth and maturity. He didn't just pray for his brethren in general, but specifically prayed for those he loved. He prayed for the Romans (Rom. 1:8-10), for Israel (Rom. 10:1), for the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:4), for the removal of his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10), for the Ephesians (Eph. 1:16-17), for the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-7), for the Colossians (Col. 1:3-4, 9-10), for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:2-3; 3:9-13; 2 Thess. 1:3, 11-12; 2:13) and for Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3-4). Without a doubt, Paul was a praying man. He must have spent much time in prayer.

Conclusion

Prayer is important. It is the highest exercise of man's spiritual nature. Thus, it is important that we take care to do it right. May we ever pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17).

EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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WIVES BE IN SUBJECTION

QUESTION: In recent months I heard a sermon which made reference to I Pet. 3:5. Would you please clarify the meaning of "wives be in subjection unto their own husbands?"

ANSWER: Peter begins this section (I Pet. 3:1-7) of husband-wife relationship by exhorting wives to be in subjection to their own husbands, even their heathen husbands. Those women who had obeyed the gospel might think they did not have to be subordinate to their unbelieving spouses after they became Christians. The apostle counteracts this potentially by the instructions given. The believing wife was not only to be submissive, but also exemplify chastity, reverence, meekness and quietness (calm, tranquil, at peace).

To these impeccable traits and sterling qualities, Peter adds the example of holy women of old (v. 5). They trusted in God, adorned themselves with godly virtues, and were subject to their husbands. Sarah is specifically mentioned as a faithful wife who obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord (v. 6). "Lord" is a title of honor addressed to a superior. Because of her attitude of continuous subordination, and because she recognized the supremacy (headship) of her husband, she serves as an example to all Christian wives today. Peter said, "whose daughters ye are (Sarah's), as long as ye do well."

The word "subjection" is from the Greek word *hupostasso*. Thayer defines it to mean, "to subject one's self, to obey; to subject to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice" (*Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 645). Hence, Peter says that wives are to obey, to submit, to yield to their husbands, even their admonition and advice.

From the following Scriptures we observe several things about the wife's subordination to her husband:

(1) It is to be an "own husband" type submission. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22; cf. 1 Pet. 3:1). The word *own* puts emphasis on the gravity, seriousness and magnitude of her obedience.

(2) From the verse quoted in the preceding paragraph, we see that it is "as unto the Lord" type submission. The wife is to submit herself unto her husband even as she is to faithfully and lovingly obey Jesus Christ.

(3) It is "as the church is subject to Christ" type submission. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every

thing" (Eph. 5:24). It would be just as out of place for the church to take over the headship of Christ as it would be for a wife to assume headship of her husband.

(4) It is an "in everything" type submission as the latter part of Eph. 5:24 states. The exception would be if the husband demanded disobedience to Christ on the part of his wife. Apostles of Christ said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

(5) It is "as fit in the Lord" type submission. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Col. 3:18). Robert Gromacki wrote, "Subordination befits Christian women. God established the authority of family function in the Garden of Eden. The entrance of sin or the salvation experience have not changed that basic principle. It is not a cultural oddity which can be altered in different countries and ages" (*An Exposition of Colossians & Philemon*, p. 148).

Subordination does not mean women are inferior to men intellectually, morally or spiritually, but in God's order of authority, woman is to be in subjection to man. The Bible states, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). Though the wife is subject to her husband, the husband is not without obligation toward his wife. He is to love her even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25). The husband is not to be a tyrant over his wife, abuse her or treat her as chattel property. Neither is he to be a wimp and a passive non-entity. But he is to assume the headship and to love his wife as his own body (Eph. 5:23, 28).

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STUDIES IN 1ST & 2ND TIMOTHY ELDERS

(1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9)

One of the things Paul instructed Timothy about was the kind of man that can serve a congregation in the capacity of an "elder". As an evangelist, Timothy was obligated to teach this to others, which would contribute to "Saving thyself and them that hear thee".

Elders in every church is essentially connected to saving souls. Their work involves "watching for souls" (Heb. 13:17). They "speak unto you the word of God" (Heb. 13:7), and "by sound doctrine both exhort and convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). Qualified elders, properly functioning in every church, is as essential and effective in saving souls as the evangelist who constantly preaches the gospel that is God's power to save.

The particular role of elders in a congregation, according to the scriptures, is feeding, tending, ruling, overseeing the flock of God which is among you (1 Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28). They belong to the organizational structure of a local church, which consists of bishops (elders), deacons, and saints (Phil. 1:1). God's order is a plurality of elders/bishops (Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-7) in every church (Acts 20:17; 14:23; Tit. 1:5). Arbitrary ruling is forbidden to them (1 Pet. 5:3) and their oversight is confined to the "flock among them". This means that each congregation is independent of other congregations. They are not bound by any ecclesiastical federation, but each church, under its elders, is subject to Christ, the great head of the church.

Relying on human wisdom instead of sound doctrine has brought into existence many organizations, offices and officers which are unknown to the New Testament, and numerous corruptions of the New Testament pattern of church government. When you see one bishop over a congregation, or a number of churches, the bishops of one congregation exercising authority over other congregations, a federation of numerous congregations in Associations, Synods, Boards, Conventions (with their desired and appointed officers), and other like inventions, you are seeing a corruption of the New Testament order.

I believe the lack of dedicated, qualified elders in a church pose the greatest threat to divisions and the loss of souls in the Lord's church today. Brethren, let us continue to pray that the Lord will "send forth laborers (evangelists) into the field", but also that He will "raise up elders in the churches".

But, what kind of men can thus serve? Are the qualifications so exacting that only a very few can qualify? When properly understood, there is a very little required than that required and expected of any Christian. All qualifications given are essential; not one can be ignored. Yet, we must remember that some are absolute and some (most) relative. (Relative means the qualification maybe possessed in degrees). Some are positive and some negative. Titus 1:5-9 is studied along with 1 Tim. 3:1-7 because they deal with the same thing.

Moral Virtues Or Character

As we look at the stated qualifications, I am indicating whether positive or negative; absolute or relative by abbreviations in parenthesis.

1. Blameless—no blame (Neg., Rel.). Because some look for perfection in a relative characteristic, many good men are declared unqualified, thus contributing to "no elders" churches.

2. Temperate, vigilant (Pos., Rel.).

3. Sober minded (Pos., Rel.).

4. Good behavior (Pos., Rel.).

5. Given to hospitality (Pos., Rel.).

6. Not given to wine (Neg., Abs.).

7. No striker—"ready with a blow-pugnacious" (Neg., Abs.).

8. Not greedy of filthy lucre—"eager for base gain-avaricious" (Neg., Abs.).

9. Patient — self control (Pos., Rel.).

10. Not a brawler—"quarrelsome over wine"—"drunken" (Neg., Abs.).

11. Not covetous (Neg., Abs.).

12. Good report from without (Pos., Abs.).

13. Not self-willed (Neg., Abs.). A deficiency here causes elders to act as bosses—lords, be intolerant of fellow elder's views, and members of the flock, which provokes suspicions, distrust, resentment, and strife. Elders should be immovable and unyielding in matters of faith, but in matters involving choice and judgment, a spirit of deference to others must exist. . . "wash their brethren's feet" (Jno. 13:12 -14).

14. Not soon angry (Neg., Rel.).

15. Just (Pos., Abs.).

16. Holy (Pos., Abs.—though holiness itself its relative).

Family Requirements

1. Husband of one wife (Pos., Abs.).

Various views of what is meant by this qualification have been given (No Concubinage, Polygamy, Remarriage, Bachelor elders, etc.). It should be obvious to all that the stated qualification is met if (1) the man has a wife, (2) any previous marriage ended in death, (3) any previous marriage ended by the wife being put away for adultery.

2. "Rule well his own house"—wife-children (Pos., Abs.).

Here, the elder -flock relationship is compared to the father -family relationship. The husband who is tyrant in his home, creating a feeling of fear and resentment, and provoking wrath, discouragement, and rebellion on the part of those in the home, would be the same way,

and do the same, if an elder in the Lord's church. A man's headship (rule) in his home is an indication of what he would be as an elder.

Children also enter into the qualifying of a man for the eldership. He is to have children "that believe" and who are "in subjection". How many children is not stated. Children is plural, but in Hebrew, Greek, and English the word is used so as to embrace the singular. Sarah nursed children though she only had one (Gen. 21:7). All of Jacobs sons and daughters rose up to comfort him, but he only had one daughter (Gen. 37:35). If the plural does not include the singular, then Moses' law "If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother (Matt. 22:24) would not apply until the man had at least two children. The same would be true of a widow qualifying for regular support from the church. She must have brought up at least two before she would qualify (1 Tim. 5:4). Those who would demand that one must have at least two children before he meets this qualification, are saying something the Bible does not say. In fact, they are making "children" mean something different from its Bible use. This concept has kept some congregations from having elders.

Extreme concepts of an elder and his family have contributed to "churches without elders". Some have an "impossibility of apostacy" concept of Prov. 22:6 regarding the "bringing up a child", so that if an offspring, no longer of the household, goes astray, even abandoning the faith, proves defectiveness in the father's training back at home years ago, and thereby forbids that godly father being appointed, or to continue serving, as an elder. More is expected of an elder than God, "who brought up children that rebelled" (Isa. 1:2). There have been cases of elders, with believing, submissive children, serving well for years, then another child came along later in life, and in the eyes of some, the elder became unqualified and would have to wait until that child became a believer and demonstrated submissiveness before he would again be qualified. Such extremes press the scriptural requirements beyond the truth and reason.

Certain Abilities

In order to do the work of an elder, there are certain capabilities that one must have. I think it would be much better to think of the eldership as a work that requires certain qualities or abilities than an office to be filled by men who meet specified qualifications. Maybe this would keep brethren from demanding perfection for every stated qualification.

One of these abilities is "apt to teach". The work "apt" is translated "able" in the NASB and NKJ. The qualification is positive, but relative. No one should try to make the degree of one's ability a necessity.

Another essential quality in this area is "Not a novice"—not a new convert, or one who has not had time to grow in faith and service. The requirement is negative and absolute. Some may go to extremes in setting how much time, which is not revealed. The time would involve whatever is needed to bring about the required condition or situation.

A third ability, essential to doing the work of an elder is "holding fast the faithful work" (Tit. 1:9). This quality is positive and absolute. One can not do the work of an elder without this. He cannot teach others the truth, exhort, convince the gainsayers, or set a proper example without this ability.

Conclusion

A man does not have to be "perfect" . . . with no weaknesses or frailties, above the possibility of being tempted, in order to serve as an elder. There is no such person. Any man who is a child of God, who has and does put to death the works of the flesh, develops the Christian graces (patience, gentleness, kindness, holiness, etc.), with a family that is God regulated wherein he demonstrates godly rule and management, and possesses an intense love and concern for truth and souls, is the kind of man who may be selected and appointed to serve a congregation as an elder. Such men in each church is "bread of life".

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THE BIBLE CLASS BLUES

It is customary to associate the color blue with depression, or with a melancholy disposition. I don't know why, for blue happens to be my favorite color, and brightens my life continually. But, I yield to the common usage of the term.

There is even a category of music known as The Blues. Such songs have been written about coal mines, freight trains, war, love, and all else in between. And, while I enjoy my present Bible class, and do not want to leave my readers in a depressed state of mind, there are enough ideas and practices associated with Bible classes to give a body the blues.

There is not enough Bible taught in most sectarian churches to justify usage of the term "Bible Class." Most Vacation Bible Schools are a farce, having more characteristics of a carnival than of a Bible school. The term VBS does about as much for me as the letters PTL.

But in churches of Christ, it should not be so. A Bible class should be exactly what the term implies—a class where the Bible is taught and studied. While this principle may be implemented in most churches of Christ, there are exceptions. And, from some things I have seen and heard, some classes need to change their name, shape up, or ship out.

Some church members regard the Bible class as a thing for women and children; or, as an opportunity for a few zealous Christians to gain "extra credit" in their quest for eternal life; or, as an occasion for the prodigal to do penance; or, simply as an optional introduction to "taking the emblems" (observing the Lord's supper).

But, there are other attitudes which disturb me even more than those just mentioned, attitudes manifested on the part of both teachers and students who are ordinarily faithful in attending Bible classes.

All congregations are not comprised of the same numbers of people, or even the same age groups. Local needs should determine the type of class, and the method of study. Special classes require special applications.

Most of what I have to say is based on experiences with what is generally termed the adult Bible class — a mixture of various ages, attitudes, and degrees of Bible knowledge. The audience consists of both church members and "outsiders." This adult Bible class, generally conducted in the auditorium, often conveys the first (and last), impressions received by people making their initial contact with the church of Christ. What do they see,

and hear? What must they think?

The Bible needs to be taught and emphasized. Any outline or course of study should spotlight the Bible, and not just a few Bible verses used to give a degree of respectability to some course or author. And, if the one teaching or making a comment is using a translation or version different from that which others have, or different from the Bible in the pews, make it known. It could avoid some confusion and misunderstanding.

I feel left out when I visit a class where everyone else has a workbook, there are no extra copies for visitors, the blanks have been mechanically filled in prior to class, there is no room or time for questions or discussion, and there is not a Bible in sight except the one you brought with you.

And, some courses do not have enough spiritual food in them, milk or meat, to feed the smallest appetite. Teachers have to improvise and ad lib in order to use up the time. No wonder some Bible classes are avoided, or used for yawning exercises. A baby's cry is a welcomed diversion.

I emphatically deny that a textual study of the Bible, either topical or expository, has to be dull or boring. There may be dull teachers and students, but the Bible contains the most interesting and exciting stories to be found anywhere. Even classes for small children need to emphasize the Bible, Bible stories, and Bible characters. But, back to the adult classes in the auditorium.

There are different ideas about what a Bible class should be. Some think it is a place to argue, to wrangle, and an open forum for a diversity of pet peeves.

One brother used to comment after the reading of each verse, "Brother Casebolt, why can't those sectarians see that?" Even when we came to 2 Pet. 2, he made the same comment. I told him, tactfully, that this chapter was primarily concerned with wayward children of God, not sectarians. This brother had spent most of his life in sectarianism, and could see little else.

Brethren sometimes forget that there are visitors, weak members, or even non-members in the audience. A brother (or sister), sitting near the front cannot see who is behind them. The teacher needs to see such things, and keep the discussion headed in the right direction. I believe in plain speech, but there is no need to be rude to visitors or other brethren.

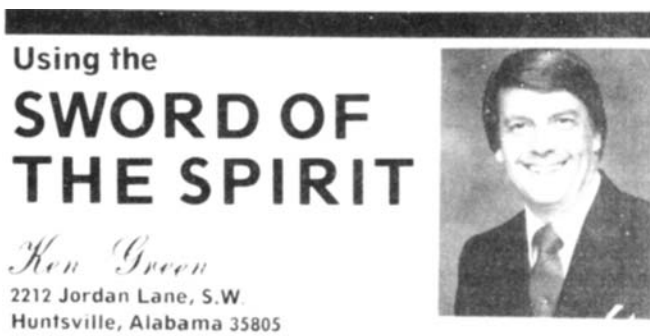
Some teachers don't help the situation much, or not at all. Their idea of a Bible class is to provoke class participation by any means. Participation is good, but it needs to be controlled. There are enough brethren who will think of some knotty problem or foolish question, without the teacher having to throw some bone of contention into the audience for people to gnaw on for an hour.

This method may be some teacher's idea of a lively class, or it may relieve the teacher of study and preparation, but edification should be the goal of a Bible class, not confusion and strife.

Some brethren don't believe in Bible classes, and just don't have them. Others may as well not have them, for all the good they do. Some are concerned that the Bible class may evolve into an organized Sunday School Society, and that is a possibility. But, some brethren are not

about to organize their Sunday morning or mid-week periods of confusion or lethargy out of existence. It is their favorite hour of entertainment.

Few churches encourage the study of the Bible, or provide opportunities for people to learn its truths. The sectarian concept of "Sunday School" has alienated a lot of people. Churches of Christ need to live up to their claim to acquaint people with the wonderful message of the Bible. We need to redeem the time and teach as many people as possible, peradventure a few will yet obey. The longsuffering of God demands it (2 Peter. 3:9).



SPURGEON'S LECTURES

It would do any preacher good to read C. H. Spurgeon's "Lectures To My Students." This 19th century work by perhaps the most famous Baptist preacher of all time is curious for its antiquated reference; yet is timeless as it addresses our human nature which just doesn't change from century to century.

Under title, "The Call To The Ministry," Spurgeon tells of one young gentleman who had left on his mind "the photograph of his exquisite self."

"That same face of his looked like the title-page to a whole volume of conceit and deceit," added Mr. Spurgeon.

The young man sent word that he must see Spurgeon, and upon entrance to his office, "Sir, I want to enter your college, and should like to enter it at once."

"Well, Sir," said I, "I fear we have no room for you at present, but your case shall be considered."

"But mine is a remarkable case, Sir; you have probably never received such an application as mine before."

"Very good, we'll see about it; the secretary will give you one of the application papers, and you can see me on Monday."

He arrived on Monday with the questions answered in a most extraordinary way. "He claimed to have read all ancient and modern literature, and after giving an immense list he added, 'this is but a selection; I have read most extensively in all departments.'"

"As to his preaching, he could produce the highest testimonials, but hardly thought they would be needed, as a personal interview would convince me of his ability at once."

"His surprise was great when I said, 'Sir, I am obliged to tell you I cannot receive you.'"

"Why not, Sir?"

"I will tell you plainly. You are so dreadfully clever that I could not insult you by receiving you into our college, where we have none but rather ordinary men; the president, tutors, and students, are all men of moderate attainments, and you would have to condescend too much in coming among us."

The young gentleman looked at Spurgeon severely, and said with dignity, "Do you mean to say, that because I have an unusual genius, and I have produced in myself a gigantic mind such as is rarely seen, I am refused admittance into your college?"

"Yes," Spurgeon replied.

"Then Sir, you ought to allow me a trial of my preaching abilities; select me any text you like, or suggest any subject you please, and here in this very room I will speak upon it, or preach upon it without deliberation, and you will be surprised."

"No, thank you, I would rather not have the trouble of listening to you."

"Trouble, Sir! I assure you it would be the greatest possible pleasure you could have."

Spurgeon assured him it might be, but that he felt himself unworthy of the privilege, and bade him a long farewell.

Spurgeon later tells of a story which had been related to him of a young man who desired to go to India in connection with the London Missionary Society. He was to be examined as to his fitness for such a post by a Matthew Wilks.

Mr. Wilks wrote the young gentleman and told him to call upon him at six o'clock the next morning. Though he had to walk many miles, he was at the house punctually. Mr. Wilks, however, kept him waiting for several hours. Finally, he arrived in the room and began the interview.

"Well, young man, so you want to be a missionary? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, Sir, I hope I do."

"And have you had any education?"

"Yes, Sir, a little."

"Well, now, we'll try you; can you spell 'cat'?"

The young man hardly knew how to answer, but he replied steadily, "C-A-T, cat."

"Very good, now can you spell 'dog'?"

The youth replied, "D-O-G, dog."

"Well, that is right; I see you will do in your spelling, and now for your arithmetic; how many are twice two?"

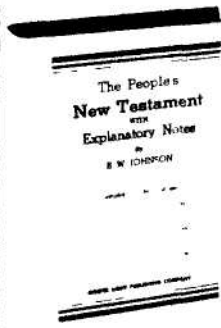
Mr. Spurgeon comments, "It is a wonder that Mr. Wilks did not receive 'twice two' after the fashion of muscular Christianity, but the patient youth gave the right reply and dismissed."

Matthew Wilks at the committee meeting said, "I cordially recommend that young man; his testimonials and character I have duly examined, and besides that, I have given him a rare personal trial such as few could bear.

"I tried his self-denial, he was up in the morning early; I tried his temper, and I tried his humility; he can spell 'cat' and 'dog', and can tell that 'twice two make four', and he will do for a missionary exceedingly well."

May the Lord give us strength to live by these words, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. 6:3-10)

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There are few words as chilling as "death." It is not a concept we enjoy thinking about very much and yet we all recognize, some of us more distinctly than others, that it is stark reality—no one will escape its icy grip. In large measure, Christians are Christians because of their concern about what takes place after physical death. Every funeral we attend or every death we read about brings the reality back home to our minds—"we too will pass through the experience."

How ought we to think about death? I would like to suggest that we think about it in terms of "shifts." I believe we'll see that the apostle Paul's view of death warrants such a view. Some folks work "shifts" in their jobs and are familiar with three elements of shift-work: the "day shift", the "swing shift" and the "nights shift." Let's consider what the scriptures say about death, using this analogy. As we do so, keep in mind that the Christian ought to view his life as preparation for death. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). This does not present a dim view of life, but a simple, healthy recognition of its brevity. "Indeed, You have made my days as hand-breadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly, every man at his best state is but a vapor" (Psa. 39:5).

Let's first consider the "Day Shift." Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 4:16-5:11 that this body in which we live is on the way out. He says it's "perishing" (4:16); that it is a "tent"—i. e., temporary (5:1); that we "groan" (5:2); that we are "burdened" (5:4). Paul proves the proposition—we had better prepare for the "night shift" while on the "day shift"! There is no future here! "Here we have no continuing city" (Heb. 13:14). Therefore, our life must be lived by faith, not by sight (4:18; 5:7) and it is a life of preparation with *assurance* that the best is yet to come. Paul says "we know" that we have a building from God (5:1). He says that it is God Himself who has prepared us for this very thing and has given us the Spirit as a guarantee (5:5). "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord." Christian, where would you rather be? We are to make the most of our time on the "day shift." But let's be aware that it is coming to a close.

When life is over, what happens? Yes, we die. But what happens at the moment of death? This moment we might call the "Swing Shift" and about it we know virtually nothing. God has not chosen to reveal to us things concerning the experience of death itself. Hence,

because of our lack of knowledge of this element of death, we "fear" death and I believe it is a healthy fear which God has placed within us. I regard with great skepticism anyone who says that they have "no fear" of this aspect of death. It is natural to possess some fear of those things about which we have little knowledge. Death is real (Heb. 9:27) and death is sudden (Eccl. 9:12). The right-thinking Christian never entertains a "death wish." For example, he would not commit suicide, even if it wasn't sin. He doesn't think that way! It is true, as Paul said, that "to die is gain" but it is equally true that "to live is Christ." While we must live our life in preparation for death, we are not "zombies" or celestial tenants just waiting to die. There are those, as someone once said, that are "so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good."

It is the death in the long view that Christians do not fear. The after-life, we'll call it the "Night Shift," is something we do indeed look forward to. Our love of life is never put in place of our love for the Lord and we willingly give it up when called to do so. Why? Because we do not fear the experience of death itself? No, but because we value the prospect of being with the Lord from then on (2 Cor. 5:8). We look at death, under this aspect, as an extension of "life." Jesus said in Jn. 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." Paul called it, in 2 Cor. 4:17, the "eternal weight of glory" which bears no comparison to the temporary troubles we might have to undergo while here on earth. It can truly be said that, for the Christian, death is not a period but a comma. Paul told the Thessalonians that they should temper their sorrow, since those who had passed on had simply "fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13). I like to think of my godly grandparents as having fallen asleep or as moving on to the "night shift" along with that great "cloud of witnesses" we read about in Hebrews 12:1-2.

If we truly accept the premise that death is what we are preparing for, it ought to change the way we think. Jesus said we need to die to this life (Jn 12:24-25) and Paul says we are citizens of heaven (Eph. 3:20). Christians think like people whose civic status is heaven, who have died to the world and its attractions. So, death is merely the transition into that state with which we have already become accustomed. And a person who thinks that way fashions his life goal upon that basis. "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him" (2 Cor. 5:9). Have you obeyed His voice? Are you ready?

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GOSPEL PREACHING:

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OR A "NEW" IMAGE?

Ron Halbrook
654 Gray St.
West Columbia, TX 77486

Since the Word of God is the final standard of truth, the subject matter for gospel preaching is as wide as Divine Revelation itself. "All the counsel of God" should be declared (Acts 20:27). We dare not sacrifice any truth to broaden our appeal to suit the fancies of a generation with itching ears (2 Tim. 4:2-4). The following points are *some* of the fundamentals which have always distinguished the true people of God and which need repeated emphasis in our time. Churches of Christ need to be doing everything in their power to stand for such principles as these:

1. The church must be known as *a people of "The Book"* because we are devoted to its Author as our Rock and our Redeemer. As individuals we must personally know God's Word and serve its Author. As a church we must constantly appeal to that Word and examine ourselves by its teaching in all things (Jn. 6:63; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. We want to be known as believing that salvation is *wholly of grace in its origin, provision, and revelation*, but also to be known as emphatically teaching that saving grace is *received only upon the terms and conditions of the gospel* (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 19:5, 18-20). This means the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be at the heart of *all* our preaching. The *necessity* of faith, repentance, and baptism must be made crystal clear.

3. We want to be known as a people of God who strive to work together in *peace and unity based on the Master's Word*, and a people who will *not tolerate ungodly living and false doctrine* (Acts 20:28-32; Jn. 10:1-30).

4. We want to communicate to our community an image of the church as an *undenominational* body, but more than that, as a body *opposed to denominationalism as sinful*—just like any other sin (Gal. 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).

5. We want to be seen as a church which believes in the *reality of heaven and hell* in teaching on the future destiny of the soul — a church which is not only *not teaching Premillennialism* but also *teaching against Premillennialism* as damnable heresies which deny the Lord and bring certain destruction to souls (Matt. 25:46; 2 Pet. 2:1).

6. The church must be seen not only as standing *for morality* but also as *openly opposing every form of immorality* whether homosexual sins, pre-marital sex, or unscriptural divorces and remarriages (Jn. 8:1-11; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

7. We want to be known for standing in *defense of purity* in thought, word, and deed, for instance encour-

aging modesty in dress, while *rebuking every form of impurity and lasciviousness* including immodest dress (Matt. 5:27-32; 18:6; Tit. 2:11-14).

8. We must be recognized as *supporting serious, sober, watchful living*, and as *reproving intoxication and drug abuse of all kinds* including social drinking (1 Pet. 4:1-3; 5:8-9).

9. We want to be known *for scriptural worship* and for *open, unyielding opposition to every innovation* in worship including instrumental music (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19; 1 Tim. 1:3).

10. We want to be seen practicing *the Bible pattern for church organization* and *opposing institutionalism* and every other form of departure (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:1-2).

11. We must be a people who *love their neighbors* enough to personally plant the seed of the kingdom and bless them in every possible way as we have ability and opportunity on an individual basis, but who also *oppose every carnal appeal of the social gospel* in the work of the church (Acts 8:3-4; Gal. 6:10; 1 Cor. 11:34).

12. In summary, we must try as hard as we can to be a church which preaches that there is *only one right way in religion!* Christ *alone* is the Savior of all men, the gospel system is the *only true revelation* of how God makes man righteous, and the Bible pattern for the church is the *only one* God gave or approves. "We" are not the standard in anything but God's Word is the standard to which all men must yield and submit (Jn. 14:6; Gal. 1:8-9; Eph. 4:4-6).

Some among us decided that even though churches of Christ emphasized in the past such principles as are listed above, brethren need a new public image which is to be created by telling what we *stand for* very loudly, and letting what we *oppose* "take care of itself." In other words, we ought to emphasize what the public finds "positive" and appealing, but de-emphasize if not eliminate what the people find "negative" or offensive—like the disciples suggested to Jesus in Matthew 15:12. With this trend comes the idea that the names of false religions, false doctrines, and false teachers ought not to be specified (contrary to the example of Jesus in Matthew 16:6-12).

Another facet of the subtle shift occurring in some quarters is to borrow as much as possible from the most "successful" religious movements of our time. This means highlighting the experiential, the subjective, the positive mental attitude" philosophy, the sensational, the entertaining, the emotional, the how-to-feel-good-about-yourself mesmerism that came out of the me-generation of the 1970's. *Salesmanship techniques* and *motivational jargon* borrowed from the marketplace along with a good dose of *pop psychology* are taking *precedence over plain, serious preaching of the word of the truth of the gospel as God's power to save* (Col. 1:5; Rom. 1:16).

Exposing error and condemning sin is considered counter-productive, unloving, and especially "traditional" and out-of-date (maybe o.k. for earlier times, but cannot get the job done today). Historians have noted such a shift of emphasis in the denominational world for

several decades. A review of "the most exhaustive study of ministry in the U. S. and Canada every undertaken" contained the following observations:

Ministering in America (Harper & Row; \$24.95) deals with the qualities that people in local parishes seem to want in their ministers. Time was when Protestants — liberal or conservative in theology — sought strong spiritual leadership and preaching, personal counsel based on the Bible, even some evangelistic flair. Now, says the report, the liberal churches want mostly pop psychology.

The survey sample covered 43 Protestant denominations with 55 million members (plus Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Unitarians and Reform Jews). The most desirable traits: 1) "Open Affirming Style"; 2) "Caring for Persons under Stress" (with no mention of any religious content); 3) "Congregational Leadership." To a striking extent, many people put appealing personal qualities well above traditional pastoral concern for doctrine and spiritual life, or other worldly values based on the teachings of the Bible.

All are qualities involved with psychological jargon, interpersonal relationships and group dynamics ("A Pallid But Personable Faith?" *Time Magazine*, 29 Sept 1980, p. 85).

This spirit is *rampant* among liberal churches of Christ as they grab at every fad and fancy which offers the promise of momentary popularity. This spirit is only a *trend* among more conservative brethren and now is the time to examine ourselves before its siren song seduces us and destroys our strength as the people of God.

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KEITH E. CLAYTON, 7 Buttolph Dr., Middlebury, VT 05753—The Addison County church of Christ will be moving out of the Cartmell Complex in Middlebury to our new location in New Haven, 2.8 miles north of the Middlebury town line. Our new location is just off U. S. Route 7, on Campground Road, and is visible from Route 7, being only a couple hundred yards off the westerly side. Heading west on Campground Road, we are the first building on the left. Come visit us at our newly rented facility. Our regular assembly times are: Sunday at 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. and Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M.

NEW PUBLICATION

DAVID E. PRATTE, 7021 Omaha Court, Ft. Wayne, In 46804—Many families are seeking effective alternatives to the problems that exist in the public school system. Properly done, home education can be a valid alternative. FAMILY TIMES is an informal newsletter for people who want more information about home schooling, or for families who are already home schooling and would like support and encouragement. It is written by home-schoolers who are members of a faithful local church of Christ, and is designed for the special benefit of true New Testament Christians. Family Times will be published

four times a year. The subscription price is \$2.00. Those who would like a sample copy or more information should write: **FAMILY TIMES**, 7846 St. Joe Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46835.

PREACHING IN ALASKA

JADY W. COPELAND, P.O. Box 1528, Springdale, Ar 72765—For the last three weeks in July and the first week of August, my wife and I were in Alaska, "the last frontier", for four meetings. The first was at Soldotna where Sam Binkley (not to be confused with his father) was then preaching, though he has since moved. They have about 20 members. They have completed a building (except for some trim work) which will seat about 100 in present form. They have been hindered in the past by not having their own facility. The Fred Howes family have been greatly responsible for the work there.

Next we went to Fairbanks where the church is much smaller than before due to job related moves of several families within the past year. Alaska's economy has been hurt by the oil crunch. There are now 16 members here. Cecil Willis is now working with them and doing a good job. He is working with some young men who have good potential. Joe and Sylvia King have been faithful members in Fair-

banks for a number of years and they continue to be a source of strength in the work. They have a nice building and meet at present in the basement. The upper part is partially completed and will be finished when needed. The brethren appreciate Cecil's work.

Don Spicer moved to Barrow from Anchorage about a year ago and his family along with one other family meet in his home. Both families are rather large and the membership is 10. Barrow is made up largely of natives who are tradition bound and difficult to reach. They hope that a new generation might not be so wed to religious tradition.

Dean Crews works with the church in Anchorage. He has been there five years. He is doing a good work and the church is doing well. As with other places, they have lost some families but still have about 100 meeting there. They are blessed with good elders and prospects for future growth are good.

Prices are high in Alaska and therefore wages for preachers (as well as others) must be higher. While it is true that it gets plenty cold in the inner regions of the state, Anchorage is little different, we are told, from coastal cities in the lower 48 states. When making plans for vacations, consider Alaska and visit brethren there. They are among the most hospitable people I have met in many years. So far as I know, there are only four non-institutional churches in Alaska, and we were glad to hold meetings in each place. It is good to know that brethren are being true to His word in all parts of the world.

SOME HELP NEEDED

Maezel Bates, wife of gospel preacher Carol Bates of Cottage Grove, Oregon, is now undergoing extensive radiation and chemotherapy to treat "stage two" breast cancer, in addition to surgery. Medical insurance has paid some of this, but not nearly all. In spite of help already received from brethren, family and friends, there is still a considerable balance to be paid (and the treatments will continue for a time). We saw Carol and Maezel in July while in a meeting at Albany, Oregon, about 30 miles from Cottage Grove. They attended three nights of the meeting. Her spirits are excellent and she is handling this set-back with the attitude of one who walks with the Lord and trusts Him completely. I have known Carol and Maezel Bates for many years. Their work has been faithful and true. They did not send this appeal. I am making it known because I think good brethren will want to know and help if they can. Also, cards and notes of encouragement would mean a great deal. Above all, join with them and with all of us, who know and love them, in fervent prayer. Contact: Mr. and Mrs. N. Carol Bates, 236 Adams Ave., Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424.—Editor.

LIFE'S A LOT THAT WAY

FRED MELTON, 1915 Tomball Parkway, Houston, Texas 77070

I went back one day where dreams had spanned a lifetime. I sat again by the cool stream as autumn began to shed her cloak of crimson gold. As I remained mesmerized by the rippling clear water, a leaf glided down from the trees above to rest in a quiet pool at my feet. As it nestled there stone still among many of its fellows, I noticed that it was wrinkled and brown. Continuing to stare at this one fallen leaf, I discovered there were streaks of yellow and gold still discernible and even strains of faded green which spoke of its useful life in days gone by. All the trees around me were suddenly shaken by a shifting southwest breeze and I looked to see hundreds of vibrant yellow leaves drifting through shafts of sunlight toward the valley floor to make way for next year's green.

It was then I knew that our lives are a lot that way. If one lives according to God's divine plan, life's colors will surely show through; perhaps even at their brightest just before they fall asleep among their brethren in God's green earth, never more to be seen by the eyes of this old world.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS reports from south Africa that three have been baptized and one restored. One of these was baptized in Zululand, another in Eshowe as a result of a tent meeting. Another was baptized as a result of a tent meeting. Another was baptized as a result of follow-up from a correspondence course. Also, the church in Eshowe with-drew from two. The William's are making are making plans to visit in the USA from August-October, 1988. He would like to hear from

churches who are interested in the work in South Africa and would be glad to conduct some meetings while here.

STEFANO CORAZZA REPORTS FROM Udine, Italy that one was baptized there recently. She is a 21 year-old woman who is engaged to a young man who was baptized in March, 1987.

EFRAIN F. PEREZ of Valparaiso, Chile reports that three groups have been converted in the Valparaiso area after six months of teaching. In July, 1987 a former pentecostal preacher (who was leader of these three groups) was baptized. Since then many others have followed. Five were baptized on August 29 from Limache and LA Narvaes including four men who are now taking the preacher training course.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BEDFORD, OHIO—The Columbus Street church is looking for an experienced gospel preacher. The church can provide a house and full support. Bedford is located 14 miles southeast of Cleveland. IF interested, please contact either of the elders, Jerry Paugh (216) 255-5493; or Joe Stano (216) 232-8286.

OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA—The Okeechobee church of Christ needs a preacher for full time work. Usual attendance is 25-35 on Sundays (40-60 in winter). Partial support is available. Those interested may call James Wagster (813) 763-9612.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

WHAT THE SEAT CAN ENDURE

Every now and then we are treated to the wisdom that "the mind can only absorb what the seat can endure." This is offered to prompt preachers to be brief. I do not favor repetitious sermons or rambling discourses without apparent design. Every speaker needs to build rapport with his audience and be alert to signs of weariness or loss of interest. Every speaker cannot hold an audience for long periods of time. But it needs to be said that the seat can endure whatever the mind wills. Whatever occupies the mind will determine very often what the seat can endure. That is what enables people to sit for hours to drive to a vacation spot or to see relatives long missed. That is what empowers us to stay strapped in a seat on a jet plane across the country, or halfway around the world. That is what caused me to sit for 7 hours in a school taught by a physical therapist a few weeks after back surgery, with only a five minute stretch every hour. That is what causes people to sit through baseball double-headers and football games. The mind wills it and the seat endures it. The saying is catchy and usually draws a laugh, but it is actually a reverse of the truth. Let's get it straight—"The seat can endure what the mind wills it to endure." Now, that's more like it.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL

In traveling over the country the last few years, and especially the past two, I noticed more and more racially integrated churches, especially in the deep south, —in the midwest and on the eastern seaboard. Not only do I see sizeable numbers of blacks and whites worshipping and working together, but I see blacks serving as elders, deacons, song leaders and teachers. That is as it should be. The gospel is for all. There will be no separate compartments in heaven for different races.

WINTER CLASSES

The editor looks forward to winter classes at Manslick Road church during December, January and February. In addition to classes on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, there will be a Monday night class on SOUL WINNING and a Friday morning class on the book of HEBREWS. While these classes are planned as a part of the teaching work of the Manslick Road church for the edification of the members of that local body, we are glad to welcome any from the surrounding areas who are free at those times. We have taught winter series since 1965. All students should bring a Bible and a notebook. The Friday morning class lasts from 10:00 AM. to 12 noon.