



# Please Don't Leave For College

T. Sean Sullivan

The middle of August or the first of September thousands of young people head off to college campuses for their fall semester of higher education. The majority of those students are young men and women from eighteen to twenty-four. This young group represents every possible facet of our society and the world. Will you be among that group? (Perhaps you are at a different stage in life and your son or daughter will be in that group.)

This is an open letter to Christians who are going away to college:

College, it seems today, is necessary for the possibility of “career” employment. Gone are the days of working your way up from the mail room with a high school diploma, now the demand is a Bachelors or Masters Degree just to apply for the bottom wrung.

I fully understand that a degree is needed for what many would call “success” but at what cost is that success achieved? These words of warning are not written to turn you away from education. It is not the scholastic education

that causes my fears. It is the atmosphere surrounding that education. What will it cost you? What will you leave behind when you go to college?

The college atmosphere offers you the opportunity to leave your self worth and confidence behind. In high school, you were set and confident; mostly stayed out of trouble; you knew who your friends were, however few or many there might have been. You had the confidence to say “no” to things that you did not want to do and mostly your



friends would support your decisions. One of the greatest decisions you made was to become a Christian. You obeyed the gospel; gave your life to serving God through Jesus Christ your Savior. In college, you may suddenly feel like a fish out of water. You may feel desperate to find acceptance among the new people that surround you. All too often, their desires, traits, and actions are foreign to those of your life before college. What will you leave behind in order to be ac-

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# What Is a False Teacher?

Mike Willis

In recent years, discussion has centered on who is a false teacher. Among non-institutional brethren, the discussion about who is a false teacher began when Edward Fudge raised the issue in the early 1970s when he advocated unity-in-diversity. The discussion was renewed when brother Ed Harrell wrote his article entitled “Homer Hailey: False Teacher?” (*Christianity Magazine*, November 1988, 6-9). In the context of his defense of brother Hailey, brother Harrell wrote, “A false teacher is surely one whose dishonest motives and/or ignorance distinguish him from the sincere brother who has reached an erroneous conclusion.” Since this time, there have been several articles written among us which affirm that one is not a false teacher just because what he teaches is false. Rather, he is a false teacher because of his base character.



The same argument was made by Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside in their defense of unity-in-diversity. Whether or not one agrees with Garrett and Ketcherside, he cannot deny that their redefining the term is a critical part of the unity-in-diversity doctrine.

What does the word “false teacher” (*pseudodidaskalos*) mean? The word “false teacher” only occurs in 2 Peter 2:1 which says, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” Those who assert that false teacher refers to the man’s character, not his doctrine, use the context of 2 Peter 2, which describes the various moral failures of the false teachers of Peter’s day, as proof that “false teacher” refers to a “bad apple.” However, verse 1 tells us by the appositional phrase “who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them,” what the phrase means.

But, there is additional evidence as well. Other passages use similar modifying words to describe the teacher. Consider the following:

**1. Teachers of good things.** Paul wrote, “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, *teachers of good things*” (Tit. 2:3). One may not have picked up on this word reading the KJV, but the Greek word is *kalodidaskalos* which corresponds very nicely with *pseudodidaskalos* (2 Pet. 2:1). What see *False Teachers* on p. 369

# The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints

Connie W. Adams

The first four verses of Jude sounded a warning to those within the church of that day to guard against “certain men” who would creep in “unawares” and undermine that system of divine truth which he called “the faith.” Jude was written late in the first century when the issues facing the church had taken on a different complexion from those of the first few decades after Pentecost. By this time the formal Jewish opposition had lost its punch and the church faced the insidious threats of bizarre philosophical approaches which came in with the advance of the gospel in Greece and North Africa.

The trouble they faced did not come from frontal assaults on the faith from the unbelieving world, but rather from the deceitful behavior of those who professed allegiance to the truth while drawing away disciples after them. Attacks from without have usually drawn the people of God closer together. The greatest devastation has always come from within.

### A Body of Truth — “The Faith”

The appeal of Jude 3 is to contend for “the faith.” This argues that there is a body of teaching distinguished from all human wisdom. “The faith” can be determined. If not, then contention for it would be impossible. It is popular to argue that truth cannot be known absolutely, that every person must find what appears to him to be truth. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Before Pilate he said, “I am come to bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). The fullness of grace and truth came by him (John 1:14, 17). He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into “all truth” (John 16:13-14) There is a body of truth called “the faith” which may be known so that “saints” may contend for it.

### Complete Truth — “Once” Delivered

The finality and completeness of this body of teaching is indicated by the word *hapax* translated “once” (KJV), “once for all” (NASV). This body of truth has one time for all time been made known. This passage strikes a death blow to all claims of latter day revelations. It argues the finality, completeness, and all sufficiency of God’s revelation. There is nothing left to be added from human wisdom. Nothing should be subtracted from it. Indeed, “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life godliness through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:3). It was during one interval of human history that God began and completed the revelation

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of that body of truth called “the faith.” Paul said “once was I stoned” (2 Cor. 11:25). That exhausted the number of times he was stoned. Man’s appointment with death is summarized and finalized in the statement “It is appointed unto man once to die” (Heb. 9:27). When Jude said the faith was “once for all” delivered to the saints, that argues for the fulness and completeness of divine truth. Every system of religion based on the claim of latter day revelations is therefore false, including Mormonism, Adventism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and other systems of like nature. Common to all of them is the notion that divine revelation was *not* once for all delivered. If the fulness of that revelation occurred in the first century, then all such claimants are false teachers, blind guides, and deceitful workers.

### Authoritative Truth — “Delivered”

When Jude said this faith was once “delivered,” he emphasized the authoritative nature of this body of teaching. In Titus 1:3 Paul said that God “hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, the kind Paul did. There are three terms which describe these men through whom the faith was delivered.

**1. Ambassadors.** Paul said, “We are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20). This passage is misapplied when used of modern-day Christians. The term “ambassador” implies a commission, suggests an official embassy, and includes credentials to demonstrate the authority by which the ambassador spoke. To receive an ambassador is to extend recognition to the power which sent him. Likewise, to reject him is to reject the power standing behind him. Jesus said to his apostles, “He that receiveth you receiveth me” (Matt. 10:40). These men were sent forth to bind and loose what had already been bound in heaven (Matt. 18:18). Unto them Jesus said, “Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23). Unto these ambassadors of heaven the Lord gave power to state divine law. That law did not originate with them, for it was already settled in heaven. They made it known. Further, they were given credentials to show their official embassy in the miraculous powers they possessed. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12). The age of miracles belonged to the time of their ambassadorship. While they performed the duties of ambassadors in their preaching, their credentials confirmed their word (Mark 16:20).

**2. Earthen Vessels.** In order to “deliver” the faith, Christ chose human agents in the apostles into whose hearts he shined the light of inspiration. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, *hath shined in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor. 4:6-7). The “earthen vessels” of this

passage were those who had the light of divine inspiration and therefore does not refer to preachers other than those who originally “delivered” the faith. Since they had “the light” of divine knowledge, their message was authoritative and not to be rejected.

**3. Witnesses.** The faith was “delivered” by *witnesses* who saw the Lord, heard him speak, knew directly of his deeds, and could speak as eye witnesses of his resurrection. Just before his ascension, Jesus said to them, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Peter said, “We . . . were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet 1:16). John wrote, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you” (1 John 1:1-3). The special appearance of the Lord to Paul was to make him “a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16). The faith was “delivered” by chosen and empowered ambassadors who were vessels of earth into whose hearts the light of divine revelation shone, and who were witnesses of the power and majesty of our Lord. What they “delivered” is authoritative and binding on earth even as it is in heaven.

### Trustees of the Faith — “The Saints”

When this faith was learned and obeyed, it made saints of those who received the gospel, even as it does today. A saint is one made holy and consecrated to the Lord’s service. Every saint should cherish the truth which set him free and should seriously consider his obligation to guard that body of truth. The concept of a guardian or a watchman is honorable. The faith is worth contending for. The word “contend” in Jude 3 represents the most strenuous effort required of man. It speaks of struggle, of intense effort. If the faith is not defended from those who creep in unawares, then the hope of all mankind is lost. When saints grow weary from the struggle and retire from the field of battle, then the enemy will take captive souls at his will. The saints are the last line of defense in this conflict. Christians of today are indebted to those who went before us and had to sort out truth from error. Finding truth, they contended for it with all their might. We owe it to the faith to contend for it. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to generations yet unborn. What God delivered once for all must be kept as he gave it. “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5). Let us be constantly aware of the sly maneuvers of those who would slip into the flock, deny the faith, compromise with sin and error, and lead souls astray. What kind of custodian of the faith are you? “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

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# "I Am Afraid of You"

## Galatians 4:11

On Paul's first preaching trip from Antioch he traveled into the region of Galatia and several churches were established

Chris Reeves

there by the grace of God (Acts 13-14). Just a few years after his trip to Galatia, Paul was concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Galatian Christians (Gal. 4:11, 19, 20). He wrote them a letter to encourage them to remain faithful to Christ. He did not want them to be lost in spite of all that he had done for them in the Lord (Gal. 5:7). Was Paul an alarmist? No! Was he a right-wing extremist? No. Was he a brotherhood watchdog? No. Paul was simply a caring and concerned apostle and Christian (2 Cor. 11:28).

Let us examine why Paul was "afraid" for the Galatian brethren.

### Paul Was Afraid Because They Obeyed a Different Gospel (1:6-9).

The Galatians had accepted "another gospel" (not entirely new, but perverted). Maybe they had forgotten the true gospel. Maybe they were ignorant and had stopped growing in knowledge (Hos. 4:6; Heb. 5:12; 2 Pet. 3:18). Or, maybe they did not love the truth, or could not distinguish between truth and error (2 Thess. 2:8-13). We too

should be "afraid" of "false brethren" (Gal. 4:4) who preach "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11) and "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). We too should be "afraid" of brethren today who are poorly informed in Bible doctrine.

### Paul Was Afraid Because They Were Acting Foolishly (3:1, 3).

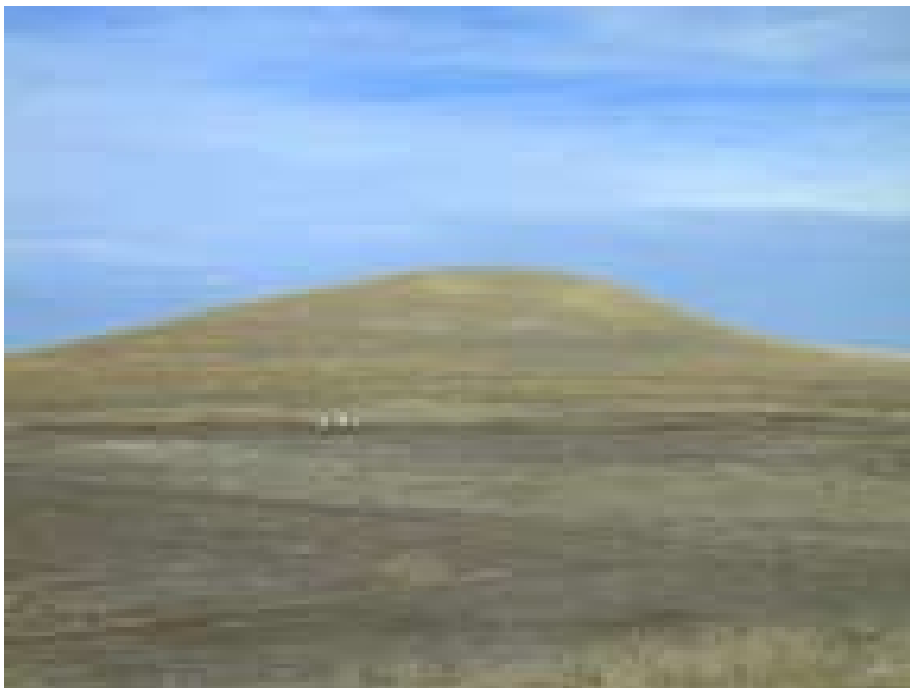
The Galatians were not acting from reason, from God's wisdom. They were acting "foolish" (Gr. *anoetos*), meaning "not understanding," "without intelligence," literally, "not using the mind." The word "foolish" means "senseless" or "unwise." The Galatians had also been "bewitched" (Gr. *baskaino*), meaning "mislead" or "charm." They had allowed themselves to be misled and charmed by Judaism and carnality. We too should be "afraid" of brethren who are not using their mind, reason, or senses to follow God's word. We should be "afraid" of brethren who are being charmed by the philosophies and fleshly desires of this life.

### Paul Was Afraid Because They Were Returning to Bondage (4:9; 5:1).

The Galatians had freedom in Christ (2:4; 4:31; 5:1, 13), but they were choosing to be in bondage again to the Old Law. We too should be "afraid" of brethren who are returning to the bondage of sin (2 Pet. 2:19-20).

### Paul Was Afraid Because They Had Lost an Appreciation for the Truth (4:16).

The Galatians did not



like Paul's plain preaching. They did not like the truth. We too should be "afraid" of brethren today who do not like plain preaching. Some brethren today do not like plain preaching on the one true church, the work and organization of the church, baptism, morality, marriage-divorce-remarriage, creation, hell, immodest apparel, denominationalism, etc.

**Paul Was Afraid Because They Desired Something Other Than Christ (4:21).** Some of the Galatians desired to go back and place themselves under the Law of Moses (4:10). They were no longer attached to the fundamentals of the gospel. We too should be "afraid" of brethren who do not remain faithful to the fundamentals of the faith.

**Paul Was Afraid Because They Were Falling Away from Grace (5:2-4).** The Galatians were falling from grace. We too should be "afraid" of brethren who fall from grace, and do what we can to get them to come back to Christ (Gal. 6:1-2; Jas. 5:19-20; Jude 22-23).

**Paul Was Afraid Because They Stopped Running the Christian Race (5:7).** The Galatians had allowed themselves to be hindered in running the Christian race. We too should be "afraid" of brethren who stop running (Heb.12:1-2).

**Paul Was Afraid Because They Were Walking by the Flesh, Instead of by the Spirit (5:13-6:10).** The Galatians were walking by the flesh. Not only had they left the doctrine of Christ, but they also engaged in carnality and immorality. We too should be "afraid" of brethren today who walk by the flesh.

Is it proper to be "afraid" today? Yes, we must be concerned for the Lord's church today. Like Paul, we must be concerned about the spiritual well-being of our fellow-brethren (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1). We must also voice our concerns (Jude 3). Paul preached about his concerns (Gal. 3:1;

4:13; cf. Acts 13-14). Paul debated his concerns (Gal. 2:3-5; cf. Acts 15:1ff; cf. note also Paul's negative attack on the Judaizing brethren, Gal. 2:4; 4:17; 5:8-12; 6:12-13). Finally, Paul wrote about his concerns (Gal. 6:10). Can we follow Paul's example and be "afraid" of that which threatens the Lord's church today? Yes, we can and should follow Paul's example (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:17; 4:9). As I try to follow Paul's example of concern for brethren, what are some things that make this author "afraid"?

"I am afraid" that some are putting friendships above Jesus Christ (Matt. 10:37). Consider how many brethren today will fellowship a false teacher (they say they won't fellowship his doctrine, or those influenced by his doctrine, but they will fellowship him). Why do they fellowship such a one? In part it is because the false teacher has been their longtime friend. Today it seems that unity and fellowship are no longer defined by 2 John 9-11, but by friendships.

"I am afraid" that basic Bible doctrines are now being questioned (2 Pet. 3:16). Such basic doctrines as the one cause for divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:9), the bounds of fellowship (2 John 9-11), the deity of Jesus (Col. 2:9), the six days of creation (Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 20:11; 31:17),

and the eternal duration of hell (Matt. 25:46), are being questioned by some brethren.

"I am afraid" that worldliness has invaded the Lord's church (2 Tim. 4:10). Brethren are engaging in worldliness and ignoring the Bible or redefining what it says to fit their worldly lifestyle. Too many brethren engage in immodest apparel, dancing, adultery, drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, abortion, profanity, etc. There are other brethren who do not do these things, but they do not want sermons preached against them either.

Brethren, there are apostasies among us today, just like those within the churches of Galatia. To be "afraid" of apostasy is not a bad thing. Think about it. When you see the apostasy that is taking place among your brethren near and far, are you "afraid"? How you answer will show how faithful you really are. Like Paul, I am afraid when I see apostasy. Are you?

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# Church Treasurer Imprisoned For Embezzlement

John Isaac Edwards

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The following story appeared in the Tuesday, July 22 edition of the Bloomington, Indiana *Herald-Times*.

“CONCORD, N.H. — A man who embezzled more than \$1.6 million from his church and funneled it into his failing business was sentenced Monday to nearly four years in federal prison. Ross Perry, who was treasurer of the First Church of Christ Scientist in Portsmouth from 1996 to 2002, pleaded guilty in April to fraud. He admitted he wrote checks to himself, his wastewater treatment company and the company’s creditors from church accounts.”

With this, attention is called to a subject often unnoticed: The church treasurer. Though a “church treasurer” as such is not specifically mentioned in Scripture, one or more in whom is entrusted the receipt, care, and disbursement of funds is generically authorized, specifically exemplified, and necessarily implied in Scripture (Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-33; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9). It is vitally important that those who handle the finances of the church be aware of some basic Bible concepts. A treasurer MUST:

## Realize That Which is in the Treasury is Consecrated to the Lord

This principle is set forth in the taking of Jericho as Joshua said, “But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord” (Josh. 6:19). When Achan took that which belonged in the Lord’s treasury and hid it in his tent, he was brought before all Israel, along

with his family, and stoned with stones and burned with fire (Josh. 7)!

In Acts 5, when Ananias and Sapphira sold land and lied about the price laid at the apostles’ feet, Peter very pointedly asked, “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?” (Acts 5:4). Upon hearing these words, Ananias fell down dead (Acts 5:5); and his wife, being involved, was divinely executed as well (Acts 5:7-10). As a result, “great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things” (Acts 5:11).

There has always been a severe price paid by those who misuse the Lord’s treasury! Every treasurer would do well to reflect seriously and soberly upon these sacred writings, lest he be involved in misappropriation of funds.

## Be Faithful

In the days of Nehemiah, certain men were made treasurers in the house of God “for they were counted faithful” (Neh. 13:13). Would you have been selected? Treasurers are stewards, and “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Only upon the condition that a man is counted faithful should he be allowed to serve in this capacity. Should he in any way become unfaithful, he ought to resign or be removed at once.

In the government of these United States, we have what is called, Department of the Treasury. Not just anybody is



appointed the Chief Financial Officer of the Federal Government. Have you ever seen the President or Congress ask for volunteers, saying, “Who among you would like to be Secretary of the Treasury?” Those laboring in the Treasury Department have tremendous responsibility and are therefore held to high standards of accountability! Yet, as important as is the United States Treasury, the Lord’s treasury is of greater significance and worth as its purpose is much more sublime. Should a treasurer in the church be any less accountable or responsible? Why is it, brethren, that we are so careless sometimes, when it comes to the church treasury? The nature of the work supported from the treasury demands that we give our careful, thoughtful, and, yes, even scrupulous attention to the treasury!

### Do Things Diligently

To the treasurers, King Artaxerxes decreed, “Whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, let it be done speedily. . . . Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven” (Ezra 7:21, 23). How badly is this Old Testament attitude needed today! The Lord’s church must come first in our lives (Matt. 6:33). As an elder, deacon, or member, a treasurer must assign the Lord’s work a place of prominence in his life. There are deposits to be made, bills to be paid, needs to be met, records to be kept, and reports to be written; all of which must be executed in a timely manner. Some have a reputation for being delinquent and dilatory in settling accounts. What a shame it would be to arrive at the meeting place to find the electricity shut off because the treasurer failed to pay the light bill! If you are unwilling to expend the effort and pay the price necessary to do the job efficiently and effectively, then let someone else do it who will.

### Provide Things Honest

Paul took measures to avoid suspicions of dishonesty in the abundance administered to the saints (2 Cor. 8:20-21). A faithful man will not be deceitful or dishonest in his doings and will take precautions to keep away from accusations and allegations of wrong doing. This is not to say false charges will not be made, but he will not give occasion for such unnecessarily. Here are some suggestions offered in the interest of providing things honest.

**1. Have a plurality of men.** When a man is alone, he is more susceptible to temptation and misrepresentation. Why not have two or three men, or more if necessary, who see to the treasury? It is always wise, when handling money, to have at least one other reputable person with you. This will divide the work, where it is not so much for one man, and help remove any doubt and uncertainty that may otherwise exist. You may want to consider requiring two signatures on every check that is written.

**2. Always be open and forthright.** If a man is faithful, he will not have any qualms about answering, in an

honest and straightforward manner, any question related to his work. When he is unapproachable or evasive, it may indicate he has something to hide.

**3. Give continuous, detailed reports.** Everything should be kept above board. There should be no “closed doors” or “hidden agendas” in the work of the local church. Every member has the right to know the amount of the weekly contribution and where the money goes. In some places, the membership is woefully uninformed as there is little, if any, reporting. Do you know the names of the preachers being supported, where they labor, and how much they are being supported? What is the balance of the treasury? How much are the regular expenses? A failure to inform and involve the members of the local church in these matters will stifle and suppress their giving and hamper and hinder the work!

In an effort to provide things honest and keep the membership informed, why not make available a monthly report, without any gaps, irregularities, or inconsistencies, giving the amount of the weekly contribution, as well as every expenditure for the month, with check number, who it was to, what it was for, and how much? Shareholders of a company receive periodic financial statements, why should members of the local church, who have an interest in the work being done, not be entitled to such?

May we give due consideration to the Lord’s treasury.

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# Divine Trials and Testing

Mark Mayberry

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The Lord of hosts “tries the feelings and the heart” (Jer. 11:20). God searches the heart, tests the mind, and gives to each man according to his ways (Jer. 17:10). God tests/tries all mankind (Ps. 11:4-7), not as an enticement to sin (Jas. 1:13-15), but rather to prove and improve character (Zech. 13:7-9; Mal. 3:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-9). This principle has application to individuals, congregations, and nations.

## The Testing of Abraham

Receiving the promise that he would have a son, Abraham believed in the Lord and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:1-6). Joyous laughter was heard when Isaac was born (21:1-7). However, Abraham’s faith was soon tested: God said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” Without questioning or delay, Abraham complied with God’s command. When his obedience was obvious, the Lord spared the child, provided an alternative sacrifice and blessed Abraham a second time (Gen. 22:1-19). Full obedience demonstrates the fulness of one’s faith (Heb. 11:17-19; Jas. 2:21-24).

## The Testing of Israel

God’s graciousness is seen in his desert dealings with Israel. Adversity is instructional: God humbled them in the wilderness, testing them, to know what was in their heart, to determine whether they would keep his commandments or not. Hunger taught dependence and thirst reliance. Provision revealed God’s power. Indeed, the wilderness was great and terrible, filled with fiery serpents, scorpions — a vast wasteland, a waterless expanse. Yet, God fed his

people with manna and quenched their thirst with water from a rock of flint. With what goal? “To do good for you in the end” (Deut. 8:1-16; cf. also Exod. 15:22-25; 16:4; 20:18-21).

## The Testing of Job

Job’s trial was somewhat different. In the aforementioned examples, God tested Abraham and Israel. Here Satan is the active agent. Filled with malignant hatred, Satan who is ever the accuser of faithful brethren (Zech. 3:1-2; Jude 9; Rev. 12:10), assaulted Job’s character and commitment to God. “Have you considered My servant Job?” said the Lord, “For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” Satan replied: “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:6-11). Therefore, as a means of vindication — both of himself and his servant — God permitted Satan to test Job. In the end, permitted trial became an avenue of permanent blessing: “You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful” (Jas. 5:7-11).

## Conclusion

The Psalms often speak of divine trials. By trying the heart and mind, God establishes the righteous (Ps. 7:9-10). Trials not only reveal character (17:3-5), they also refine it (66:8-12). Through omnipresence and omniscience, God is intimately acquainted with all our ways (139:1-6). Therefore, we should welcome divine examination, knowing that it leads to purification and perseverance (139:23-24). However, this is no trivial matter: eternity itself hangs in the balance (1 Chron. 28:9). Therefore, it is imperative that we be right with God (Rev. 2:18-23). Are you prepared to meet God? Will you pass the divine test?

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Life’s heaviest burden is to  
have nothing to carry.

## “Whosoever Shall Put Away His Wife”

Jim McDonald

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

In this passage from Matthew, Jesus quotes from Moses' law (Deut. 24:1, 3) and then contrasts that with his own teaching. Twice Matthew records Jesus' teaching about divorce and remarriage: here and again in Matthew 19 when he answers the question of the Pharisees: “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Matt. 19:3). The fact that the Jews were “trying him” with their question shows that the application of Deuteronomy 24:1, 3 was a matter of debate among themselves at that time.

The issue of Deuteronomy 24 swirls around the expression “some unclean thing.” Did this phrase mean only fornication (as some of the Jews contended) or did it involve some indiscretion on the woman's part (but which was not fornication), or did it, as the most liberal among the Jews contended, allow the husband to divorce his wife for whatever whim or fancy suited him?

The phrase “some unclean thing” is a translation from the Hebrew *ervah davar* and in some places in the Old Testament may describe fornication. However, the word is not limited to this meaning for the same phrase is used to describe human excretion (Deut. 23:13-14). Whenever a word may signify different meanings, the specific meaning must be determined by context, the soil in which the word or phrase is found.

The context of Deuteronomy 24 does not lend support that *ervah davar* means adultery for these reasons. The law was specific, the adulterer or adulteress was to be put to death and the fact that God forbade the husband who put his wife away to ever remarry her after she became the wife of another man, indicated she might be the wife of another, but not his (Deut. 24:3f). If *ervah davar* meant only adultery,

her adultery, which caused her to be put away from the first husband, added adultery again should the second husband put her away, would act as a counter-command that such folly not be allowed in Israel.

Consider the case of Mary and Joseph. Before they came together, Joseph found she was with child. He mused what he should do and because he was not willing to make a public example of her, he determined “to put her away privily” (Matt. 1:19). If “some unclean thing” (the reason for one to put away his wife) always meant fornication, then when Joseph intended to divorce her, he was making a “public example of her.” The fact that *ervah davar* did not inherently mean “fornication” meant Joseph was not willing to publicly charge Mary with fornication. To have made her a public example would have meant charges of adultery would be brought against her, and she would be stoned to death.

On the other hand, we are not to suppose that God intended that men were to divorce their wives for some of the flimsy, frivolous reasons used when they did put their wives away. God allowed them to put away their wives because of the hardness of their hearts, yet even that he hated. Malachi expressed God's feelings: “I hate putting away” (Mal. 2:16).

Thus, when Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 “but I say unto you,” he contrasted his law with the law of Moses. He was not (as some perceive) setting forth the real meaning of the law of Moses in contrast with what the Jewish teachers had corrupted it to mean. He was saying that while different reasons for divorce had been allowed under the Law of Moses, under his law only one cause was allowable for divorce and remarriage: the cause of fornication.

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# The House of the Living God

Valerio Marchi

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The disciple's proper conduct in God's house. "I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Giving instructions to the young evangelist (preacher) Timothy, the apostle Paul laid down some fundamental principles regarding the Kingdom of God, principles that can be linked to other parts of the Scriptures.

## The Church is the House of God

God is the Father and his children live in his house. The Lord adds those who become Christians to the community of believers. One cannot hope to preserve the salvation obtained through baptism if he is outside the church of Christ (Acts 2:38, 47). Certainly, it is not the church that saves, but Christ himself. He adds the saved to his church which is his spiritual body (Eph. 1:22-23) and nothing can be its substitute. Jesus, indeed, is the head of the Church and the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). He referred to the church as his spouse and the church as his bride (Rev. 19:7; 22:17).

The temple in Jerusalem and the Jews were both considered to be God's house at the time of the old covenant (see John 2:16-17; Heb. 3:2-6). From the time Christ fulfilled his earthly ministry, all who obediently obey the gospel are "being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5) and therefore become a part of the new "temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16), the NT church.

## Our God is a Living God

Idols and false gods can neither do good nor evil, they are of no value (Isa. 41:23-24), though a majority of the

human race prostrates before these false gods and idols in various manners; but the living and true God, for whom Christians abandon every idol (1 Thess. 1:9), can save or condemn, bless or leave us to perdition, lead us to eternal life or destine us to eternal torment. The living God is the Savior of all men (1 Tim 4:10), because he wants to lead all men to eternal salvation, as it is terrifying to fall into his hands when we are unrepentant sinners or false disciples (Heb 10:31). This last passage is located in a context where some Christians were reprovved for their negligence of not attending the regular church worship at the congregation to which they belonged. They were considered to "profane the blood of the covenant in doing so," while Christ sacrificed himself for his church (Heb 10:25, 29) which he purchased through the shedding of his own blood (Acts 20:28).

## Every House Has Its Rules and Regulations

Jesus promised to build the church and granted that the evil forces cannot predominate over the house of God (see Matt. 16:18). Respecting the rules is very essential for Christians, because if they do not completely allow themselves to be guided by the Head (who is Christ), this will lead them to be lost. As such, they will lead a muddled life and look at things superficially; they will be an obtuse, haughty, and rebellious people. In the book of Revelation (2-3), Jesus himself appeared to the seven churches of Asia Minor, exhorting them lovingly (but at the same time with severity) to remain faithful; otherwise, they risked having their candlestick removed and being excluded from the assembly of the faithful who belong to him.

The Lord adds the converts to his church, and they must have pure conduct. In order to do so there are rules to be obeyed without adding any self-made rules. Over the cen-

turies many churches (human denominations) were formed and have often established, maintained, and fulfilled their mission by carnal motivation. This motivation comes not from the proper NT teachings, but from the deformed and corrupted society with a view to material gain and earthly rewards. This has violated the divine and basic teachings of the Lord and his apostles.

### **The House of Truth**

The church of Christ is regarded as the “pillar and support of the truth.” Does this mean that the church can meddle with the truth as it wishes? Of course not! If the true disciple is a faithful executor of the teachings and the orders he received, the very same is applied to the church (the disciples who make up its membership). “Retain the standard of sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

The disciples are guardians of the truth that through the work of the Holy Spirit was revealed by apostles and prophets in the layout of the “faith that has been revealed to the saints once and for all” (Jude 3), the NT. The Holy Spirit rests upon the Christians and within the church in the same measure in which they accept guarding and living the Bible truth, knowing the fact that the bearers of the Word have been guided by the Spirit in every truth (John 16:13).

The Scripture describes Jesus to be the cornerstone of the spiritual house of God and the apostles and prophets as the foundation (Eph. 2:20). The church is the pillar and supporter of the truth because it is designed to safeguard, practice, and propagate the divine contents divinely revealed once and for all.

Just an example of an erroneous ordainment regarding the acquirements of the elders, the overseers, appointed within each congregation. The right and biblical point of view is taken from 1 Timothy 3. Among the things that Timothy had to do in the church of Ephesus, there was the duty to teach Christians the precise scriptural qualifications designated by the Holy Spirit in order to cover the role of an overseer and serve in an official capacity. With what authority does the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church have over its bishops to make them abstain from marrying, while Paul says that an elder “must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity”? Is the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church perhaps superior to the apostolic authority?

But any time whosoever decides to do something that is not taught in the Bible concerning the church, he is a traitor of the truth because he does not respect the rules of God.

### **The House of Love**

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples,

if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Love and truth can never be separated in God’s design; we must speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). The goal of our instruction is love (1 Tim. 4:12). Every individual should learn to see where he stands in speech, conduct, love, Spirit, faith, and purity (1 Tim. 4:12). Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and Christ Jesus in truth and love, if we abide in God’s commandments. Love is pure and sincere, if we walk according to his commandments (2 John 3, 6).

In the church of the living God, we are taught to love fervently, “from the heart” and with “a sincere love of the brethren” (1 Pet. 1:22). Applying this commandment can only make a Christian “to appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life” (Phil. 2:15). When a sincere love of the brethren is non-existent or too weak in a congregation, this congregation may appear alive, but it is in fact dead or close to death (Rev. 3:1).

### **The House of Hope**

Paul mentions that through the church the manifold wisdom of God is wholly manifested (Eph. 3:10). Writing to the gospel preacher, Titus, the same apostle recalls the hope of eternal life for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness (Tit. 1:1-2). The church of Christ is like the ark for those who refuse to partake in the sinful deeds of this world, and to finally reach the new heavenly Jerusalem that the Bible mentions in chapters 21-22 of the book of Revelation.

Living in truth and love within the body of Christ, a Christian has the “living hope through the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, the disciples of Christ can comfort one another with words like these (1 Thess. 4:18) and with the knowledge of the fact that God has given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace (2 Thess. 2:16).

Having the right attitude in the house of God, the church, will result in living fully as mentioned in Acts 13:52: “. . . and the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit,” looking forward to the return of Jesus.

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**Renew Promptly!**

# We Stand Firm!

## But When, Where; and How Firm?

Ferrell Jenkins

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One of the glaring weaknesses of God's people in too many places is the indifference and noncommittal attitude toward various problems that arise within the brotherhood. The main problem has been the lack of respect for proper authority in spiritual matters. This problem has manifested itself in many ways: the missionary society, mechanical instrumental music, modernism, pre-millennialism, institutionalism, *et. al.* In each of these controversies there have been individuals and churches who have preferred non-involvement, wishing to avoid any problems.

No doubt, brethren have had the best of intentions; they did not want trouble and controversy to exist in the congregation where they worshiped. This interest in peace and harmony is healthy, but what is overlooked is that unless our harmony is built upon the doctrine of Christ it is but hollow mockery. The failure to instruct the members of the church in the pros and cons of these issues results in many uninformed and weak members, who go away and walk right into the very thing we theoretically stand against; they just never saw the difference! Congregations which do not stand strong with reference to various problems can soon be led astray from the "old paths" through the enemy sympathizers who infiltrate its ranks.

In New Testament times, there were brethren who perverted the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-8). If one had inquired of these men as to whether they believed in the all-sufficiency of the gospel, they would likely have answered in the affirmative. But Paul showed that to change even the smallest part of the gospel was to make it into something which was not "gospel" at all. Such a little point to cause trouble over! These brethren only insisted that the converts from among the Gentiles be circumcised according to the Law of Moses. To this demand Paul answered: "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you" (Gal. 2:5). Even men of high reputation, a bold Peter and a benevolent

Barnabas, were not allowed to go unchecked.

Evangelists are to "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines," etc. (1 Tim. 1:3). Elders are to hold fast the faithful word so that they may "be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Tit. 1:9). Paul insists that these men must be silenced. The divinely given method, and thus the most effective, for the accomplishment of this is by the use of sound doctrine. Seeking to "hush-up" problems only intensifies them. All Christians are taught to examine everything carefully, but to hold only to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). The church at Ephesus was commended for testing those who claimed they were apostles but were not (Rev. 2:5). They demonstrated the willingness to try the spirits, realizing that many false prophets have gone out in the world (1 John 4:1).

A man or a local church may claim to be "sound!" but the one that will not speak out when an "issue" is alive is not living up to the Divine expectation. We differ with Martin Luther on many points, but if there was ever a man willing to *stand* it was he. Luther ably expressed what we are seeking to say in these words:

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the Devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I maybe professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.

Let us shrink not from declaring the whole counsel of God when and wherever it is needed!

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Gospel Guardian [March 24, 1966], 17, 45.



# What Does the Bible Say About Dancing?

Randy Blackaby

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Many times when the subject of dancing comes up in a Bible class or small group discussion, someone will ask, “Does the Bible directly forbid all dancing?” This may surprise you, but the answer is “No.” Not only does the Bible not forbid dancing, it gives us some examples of approved dancing.

But before you conclude that your parents, teachers, and a few preachers were just old fashioned on the subject, look at the Bible examples of dancing and at some general principles of righteousness which need to be applied. Some such principles would include godliness, upright character, righteous example, and moral purity.

Let’s look at this subject in this order:

- What the Bible does and doesn’t say about dancing.
- What the Bible says about related issues.
- Foundations for making righteous decisions about whether to dance.

## Dancing in the Old Testament

It may surprise some to learn that some forms of dancing were a part of Old Testament *worship*. It is recorded in Exodus 32:19 that the children of Israel danced around and worshiped the golden calf they asked Aaron to make while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments and God’s covenant. Of course, that was *not* approved.

In Judges 11:34 we have an example of the daughter of one of the judges of Israel (Jephthah) dancing *alone*. In Exodus 15:20-21 we have an account of women dancing

in celebration of God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt after the Red Sea crossing. No men are mentioned dancing with them. Again, in Judges 21:19 we have an example of women dancing alone — without men.

Then, in 1 Samuel 18:6 there is the account of women dancing in celebration of one of King David’s victories. It is recorded in 2 Samuel 6:14-16 that David himself danced before the ark of God in an apparent act of worship. And Psalms 149:3 and 150:4 speak of God being praised through dance.

Turning to 1 Samuel 30:16, we can read of soldiers dancing (*men only*). Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:4 that there is a time for almost everything. He includes a “time for dancing” in contrast to a “time for mourning.” And the prophet Jeremiah foretells (31:13) a time when dancing would be the joyous result of God’s work.

The Bible doesn’t condemn all dancing, but, please observe carefully the types of dancing given sanction.

- Women dancing with women in celebration
- Men dancing with men in celebration
- Dances designed to reflect joy
- Dances designed for worship

Furthermore, the Hebrew word used for dancing in the Old Testament simply speaks of whirling and turning. The present-day concepts of sexually provocative holding of the opposite sex or of mimicking acts of human sexuality while dancing are a far cry from what is illustrated in these biblical passages.

Dances of worship are nowhere authorized in the New



Testament for church worship, so we can conclude those as inappropriate today as animal sacrifices, burning incense and tithing — even though all of these forms of worship were acceptable under the Law of Moses.

### Dancing in the New Testament

Matthew 14:6 records the dancing of Herodias' daughter before Herod that so affected the old monarch that he offered her anything she wanted — up to half of his kingdom. That dance cost John the Baptist his head.

In Matthew 11:17 and Luke 7:32 dancing is mentioned in illustrating the unresponsiveness of the Jews. And Luke 15:25 mentions dancing at the celebration of the prodigal son's return home.

Notice again that the New Testament gives no examples of men and women dancing with one another in the manner of today. It is worth mentioning that there are no examples of Jesus, the apostles, or Christians dancing.

### Comparing Bible Dances With Those Today

Today's dances have men and women either in close bodily contact or gyrating themselves in each other's presence in sexually provocative ways. Virtually all dances today are specifically designed to arouse sexual feelings. Some dances actually imitate some of the intimacies of the marriage bed.

It is the nature, purpose, and results of most present-day dancing that the Bible addresses indirectly, but strongly.

Galatians 5:19-21, in its listing of the "works of the flesh," condemns what is variously translated "lewdness," "lasciviousness," or "licentiousness." These words connote excess, absence of restraint, indecency, and unchaste, shameless behavior. Thayer's lexicon says these words carry the idea of "indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of male and female." That pretty much describes most of today's dances.

These verses also condemn "revelry," or partying accompanied by drinking. Many, though not all, dances today are in this atmosphere.

A number of Scriptures urge sexual purity and holiness (Jas. 1:27; 4:4). The very purpose of dancing often runs counter to this goal. The intent of most dancing is evil.

Dances are designed by and large as an art form to express lovemaking. For this reason the steps and positions are designed to bring into physical contact those parts of a man and woman which are most sexually sensitive. Movements are designed to be visually stimulating sexually. (See *World History of Dance*, by Curt Sachs.)

The Scriptures teach us to fulfill our sexual desires within marriage. Fornication (sexual impurity) is condemned (Gal. 5:19). If a man and his wife want to dance in the privacy of their home, where their actions sexually stimulate no one but themselves, no sin occurs.

But lusting is sinful, even if fornication doesn't occur (Matt. 5:28). So, even going to a dance, while not dancing, introduces a Christian to great temptation. Watching sexually provocative dancing can easily stir lustful thoughts. Scantly or seductively clad participants characterize many dances.

### How Do We Decide?

Dancing is an issue that must be decided upon by biblical principles. We make a determination of its rightness or wrongness in the same way we decide about smoking, playing the lottery, and determining what movies we will watch. The Bible doesn't always address each specific form of sin but sets forth principles that can be used to measure all human behavior.

Is all dancing sinful? We have shown that it is not. Celebration dances that don't mix the sexes, husbands and wives dancing in private, and innocent children's dances (holding hands and dancing in a circle for example) produce no illicit thoughts or behavior.

Most dancing, however, as even the experts in the field will tell you, is designed to produce sinful passions. And sinful passions are what lead to sin. Sin separates us from God. So, answering the question of whether we should we dance isn't really that difficult, is it?

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“A wise man is strong . . .” (Prov. 24:5a).

# A Case of Deceptive Argumentation

Bill Reeves

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**The Witnesses and their Greek translators don't believe, and therefore do not follow always their own rule! They are false teachers, employing sophistry (argumentation deception). They must create their own Bible and Greek Interlinear in order to avoid the truth and to promote their own false doctrine per Unitarianism.**

The Jehovah's Witnesses are Unitarians, claiming that the Godhead is made up of only one person, God the Father. To them the Holy Spirit is but an influence or force, and that Jesus Christ is a created being.

However, the apostle Paul, directed by God the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 5:3, 5) tells us in Romans 9:5, ". . . of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Divine inspiration affirms that Christ is God.

The Bible here is clear and plain; it cannot be misunderstood! So, what do the *Watchtower* folks do with the passage. As is the case of every false teacher, they must mishandle God's word, using whatever sophistry (deceptive argumentation) that comes to mind. They must work at misrepresenting God's word.

The official Bible of the Witnesses is the version named, the *New World Translation*. It renders the passage thusly: ". . . Christ (sprang) according to the flesh: God, who is over all, (be) blessed forever. Amen." By *adding* the word "be" (and their particular punctuation) to the text, they make it say two things: that Christ sprang according to the flesh, and that God is to be blessed! This separates Christ from being God!

This is a case, pure and simple, of adding to God's word, which thing brings God's curse upon them (Rev. 22:18; Gal. 1:7-9).

That the word "be" is no part of the Greek text goes without dispute, for the Witnesses' Greek-English Interlinear (*The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*) shows no Greek word for the English word, "be." Their Interlinear gives an English word-by-word translation of the Greek text thusly: ". . . the Christ the (thing) according to flesh, the (one) being upon all (things), God blessed (one) into the ages; amen." Their Greek scholars know that the word "be" is not in the Greek text and so they do not dare place it there arbitrarily!

Compare how *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, by Marshall, renders the phrase: ". . . Christ according to flesh; the (one) being over all God blessed unto the ages, amen."

The passage plainly tells us that Christ is God. The Witnesses won't accept this, and so their translators simply add a word to the divine text to fit their denial! This is the work of human sophistry.

Another example of such sophistry (deceptive argumentation) is evident in John 1. Verse 1 plainly tells us that "the Word was God." (The Word became flesh, verse 14; this is Jesus Christ.)

Now, sophistry is called in to change this truth to fit the doctrine of the Unitarians, called Jehovah's Wit-

nesses. They simply cannot have the Word being God. So, they come out with their special version to corrupt the truth and promote their error. *The New World Translation* says, John 1:1, “In (the) beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.”

Note several things here:

1. This version admits that the Word was with God, and uses the capital “G” to indicate that Almighty God is meant.

2. However, to distinguish between Almighty God and the Word (Jesus Christ, in the flesh), and to deny him Deity, the version says that the Word was “a god” (using the lower-case “g”).

3. Employing human sophistry, they justify that translation by telling us that in the Greek text *theos*, “God,” in the first case has the definite article “the” before it, but in the second case the definite article is absent, thus not indicating God, but indicating “a god.”

4. That sounds somewhat convincing, but do they really believe (and practice!) what they say by explanation? No!

5. If they have a point, whenever in the Greek text the definite article before *theos*, “God,” is absent, we expect their translation to read, as it does in verse 1, “a god.” Does it read thusly? Do they believe their own argument? Let us look at some subsequent verses.

6. In the Greek text of verse 6, the definite article does not appear before *theos* (God). Yet, their *New World Translation* reads, “There arose a man that was sent forth as a representative of God: his name was John.” Why doesn’t it read: “representative of a god”? Remember: no definite article there!

7. Again, the Greek text of verse 12 does not have a definite article before *theos*. So, the *New World Translation* reads, “children of a god,” right? No! It reads: “However, as many as did receive him, to them he gave authority to become God’s children”!

8. Verse 13 is the same; no definite article, yet their translation says, “God.” What happened to their vaunted argument on verse 1?

9. Verse 18 takes the cake! The Greek text here employs *theos* two times, both without the definite article. Yet the *New World Translation* renders the verse thusly: “No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom position with the Father is the one that has explained him.” Now, someone explain to me how their rule works here! Why is the first *theos* “God,” and the second *theos* is “god,” when in neither case is the definite article present?

It occurred to me to take a look at the Witnesses’ Interlinear and check the word-for-word translation to see if their Greek scholars treated *theos* uniformly, as respects the presence of the definite article before *theos*, or the absence of it. What I found in verse 1 is this: “. . . the Word was toward the God, and god was the Word.” Note that the Interlinear differs from the *New World Translation* in that it says “god,” not “a god,” but it does use the lower case “g.”

Well, will their Interlinear be consistent, and translate the Greek word *theos*, preceded by the definite article, “the God,” and *theos* without the definite article, “god,” as it does in verse 1? This is what one would naturally expect. This is their rule. Well, look at how their Interlinear renders verses 6, 12, 13, and 18, where the definite article is *absent*:

Verse 6, “Came to be man having been sent forth beside God, name to him John.”

Verse 12, “He gave to them authority children of God to become.”

Verse 13, “. . . but out of God were generated.”

Verse 18, “God no one has seen at any time; only-begotten god the (one) being into the bosom of the Father that (one) explained.” See the baseless, arbitrary distinction made here between “God” and “god”? Have they no shame?

After looking at their Interlinear on John 1, I was anxious to see how they would render John 20:28. I hurried there, because I knew that the Greek text there employs the definite article before the word *theos* and that the passage has reference to Jesus Christ and Thomas’ confession of belief in him. Here is what their Interlinear says: “Answered Thomas and said to him The Lord of me and the God of me.” Amazing! They actually follow their rule here! The definite article appears and so they translate it, “the God” (with a capital “G”). Now, what does their *New World Translation* say? “In answer Thomas said to him: ‘My Lord and my God!’” Well, that settles the matter. They have given up the argument. Jesus Christ is capital G God, and not “a god,” which phrase implies that he is a created being! They have crossed themselves up by translating correctly John 20:18!

The Witnesses and their Greek translators don’t believe, and therefore do not follow always their own rule! They are false teachers, employing sophistry (argumentation deception). They must create their own Bible and Greek Interlinear in order to avoid the truth and to promote their own false doctrine per Unitarianism. The battle ground with the Watchtower people is over the deity of Jesus Christ. Join swords with them here, and don’t let them escape from this battleground!



# Thoughts On Speaking In Tongues

Larry Ray Hafley

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The following request recently came to me:

Would you mind sharing your thoughts on 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2 and the issue of speaking in tongues. My brother is a Pentecostal, and we have discussed this issue (along with several other issues) at length. I have pointed out that tongues is being able to speak in other languages, which he agrees with but then he says it is also speaking in the tongue of angels — saying his spirit is speaking to God — as he points out in the verses above. Can you offer some insight on the “tongues of angels” (13:1), and “For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries” (14:2)?

First, though Paul is using hyperbolic (exaggerated) language to stress a point in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, he gives no comfort to modern Pentecostalism. Men do have tongues, or languages (Acts 2:4, 6, 8, 11; 1 Cor. 13:1). Those tongues, or languages, are not incoherent, multi-syllable jibber jabber. Rather, they are coherent, comprehensible languages, as Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 clearly show.

(Compare Cornelius and his household who spoke in tongues. Those present knew the languages spoken, for they knew they were magnifying God [Acts 10:46]. However, they could not have known if they were magnifying or maligning God if they had not understood the languages. See 1 Corinthians 14:9, 16 — “except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken . . . how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned [‘the unlearned’ one is simply the one who does not know the language spoken, LRH] say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” Further, we know the languages spoken by Cornelius [‘the Gentiles’] were understandable, for Peter said it reminded him of “the be-

ginning” at Pentecost, and we know those languages were understood by those who heard them [Acts 2:4-11].)

Again, the tongues of men, the tongues men speak, are understandable, comprehensible. They are not “without signification” or meaning as are the vain babblings of Pentecostalism.

The same is true with the language of angels. Angels speak. They have a language or tongue (Rev. 5:2, 11, 12). It is not some sort of heavenly muttering or mumbling. Paul says though he could speak with the tongues of men and even of those of angels and did not have love, it would not profit him at all, spiritually speaking (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Throughout the book of Revelation, John heard and understood the speech of angels, and we can, too!

Second, as kindly as you can, explain to your brother that, if he is speaking and no one understands him, he is violating what the Holy Spirit has said. The Spirit says that one who is not understood is to keep quiet (1 Cor. 14:9, 16, 17, 27, 28).

**“Yes, but what about 1 Corinthians 14:2?”** The text says, “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” Let us break the passage down, take it apart, and put it back together again.

**1. What is “an unknown tongue”?** It is any language one does not understand. Russian is an “unknown tongue” to most of our readers. Why? Because it is not understood by them, it is an “unknown tongue.” Is it, therefore, an unintelligible, “heavenly, prayer” language? No! It is only

“unknown” in the sense that we do not understand it, but it is a real language that Russians understand. Now, if I speak Russian in an American assembly, I will be speaking in an “unknown tongue.”

**2. Though it is a language of men, I will be speaking “not unto men, but unto God.”** Why? “*For no man understandeth him.*” Note it, please! The text does *not* say I will be speaking in an unknown tongue because it is some kind of esoteric, ecstatic “prayer language”! No, I will be speaking “not unto men, but unto God: for no man” will understand what I am saying! See that point? It is essential that you do so in order to understand the passage.

**3. Even though I may be speaking great things, great mysteries of the wisdom and testimony of God, it is all for nought so far as the audience is concerned “for no man understandeth” me.** If I, by the Spirit, am miraculously enabled to speak Russian and then use that gift before an American audience, I may be speaking the most profound mysteries of the kingdom of God, but I speak them to God and not unto man, “for no man understandeth” me.

1 Corinthians 14, it must be remembered, stresses that the audience, the church, must receive “edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (v. 3). The purpose of the assembly is for “the edifying of the church . . . that all may learn and be comforted (vv. 12, 31). In fact, “Let all things be done unto edifying”; that is, do nothing that does not edify (v. 26).

However, these things cannot be accomplished if one speaks in a language no one understands. Such speeches are “into the air” (v. 9). They cause brethren to see one

another as barbarians (unlearned, untaught, v. 11). One cannot “amen” the prayer of another, “seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest” (v. 16). Too, if one speaks in a tongue that none understand, both the unlearned and the unbelievers will say, “ye are mad” (v. 23).

Those who speak in tongues that are not understood produce confusion. They do not produce learning, edification, comfort, and peace. Hence, they are not to speak to others if there is no interpreter. “If any man speak in an unknown tongue (remember, an unknown tongue is simply a language not understood by the audience), let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God” (vv. 27, 28). Pentecostal churches violate these words of the Spirit every time they engage in what they call “tongues speaking.” (1) They often speak all at once, not in order. (2) More than two or three speak, and (3) they make no pretense of having an interpreter, “inspired” or otherwise (and any “interpreter” they might have would be, “otherwise,” for there are no such gifts today [Acts 8:18; 1 Cor. 13:8-10; cf. Mark 16:19, 20; Gal. 3:15; Heb. 2:3, 4]).

*(Addendum:* In a letter to the fellow above, I suggested that he seek to arrange a public discussion with his brother’s Pentecostal preacher on Holy Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues. If there is any response, I will keep you informed.)

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4626 Osage, Baytown, Texas 77521

## Good Books For Your Library

### Halley’s Bible Handbook

by H.S. Halley

Widely used, comprehensive handbook; authentic photographic reproductions of the Bible lands; section on archaeological discoveries; 860 pages of helpful Bible facts; abbreviated commentary; helpful maps; church and Bible history. #10595

**\$15.99**

### Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New

by W.E. Vine

Keyed to Strong’s. Includes topical index. #10558

**\$29.97**

# Testifying and Testimonials

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

*(Editor's Note: Brother Vick preaches for the institutional church on Shelbyville Road in Indianapolis, Indiana. He is addressing a problem among institutional churches that is spilling over to affect some non-institutional brethren.)*

Testifying is a trend that is becoming prevalent in some churches claiming to follow Christ. Men and women will get up and give their testimony to show how God has saved them, or how he has worked in their lives. This practice has been borrowed from such denominational groups as the Baptists, Pentecostals, and others.

The Baptists used to have their candidates for membership get up and give their experiences to show that God had in some direct way, separate from the Bible, called them to be saved. Years ago W.L. Totty told about a man who wanted to get into the Baptist Church; so, he told of his experience as proof that he was saved. He said that he was putting his old mule into the barn and saw a light from heaven, like Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. The Baptists voted him in on his experience, but later the man realized that what he had seen in that barn that day was the sunlight coming through a knothole in the barn. So, the man went back to the Baptist Church and confessed what he really saw. The Baptist church then voted him out. The man then made this comment to the Baptist Church, "Well, let's get this straight: You voted me in on a lie and you voted me out on the truth. Is that right?"

Does the New Testament authorize testimonials, i.e., where individuals will get up before a group and tell of their conversion, or experience? Paul commanded, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). In another place the inspired penman wrote, "And whatso-

ever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). We are to scrutinize, or test, all things. We must hold to that which is good. Christians will discard or reject any practice for which there is no authority. The standard by which all things are to be tested is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In the first place, the role of a woman, according to the Bible, does not grant her a scriptural right to get up and testify to an audience in which men, as well as women, are present. Paul said, "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" (1 Cor. 14:34-35). She is not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. 2:11-12). This was not a culture thing in Paul's day, because in his limiting the role of women, he appealed to the law of Moses which went all the way back to creation. This law of submission transcends culture.

The English word "testify" means: "1 a: to make a statement based on personal knowledge or belief: bear witness b: to serve as evidence or proof 2: to express a personal conviction 3: to make a solemn declaration under oath for the purpose of establishing a fact (as in a court). . . ." No one today has any personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, i.e., he has not seen Jesus in person. One cannot give a firsthand account of having seen Jesus. No one can give evidence or proof of having seen him. There is no need to make a solemn declaration under oath for the purpose of establishing a fact. The facts of Jesus' life, death, burial, resurrection, and teaching have been established. His miracles have been

recorded. The testimony of the apostles is in the New Testament. It has been confirmed (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:14; Jude 3). Therefore, there is no need to call forth someone to “testify” or “witness” who was not an eye- or ear-witness of Jesus. We have the record of the testimony. We can read and believe it.

The Greek word translated “testify” means:

... to be a witness, to bear witness, testify, i.e., to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that (so in the N.T.) he knows it because he was taught by divine revelation or inspiration (sometimes in the N.T. the apostles are said *marturein*, as those who had been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the extraordinary sayings, deeds and sufferings of Jesus, which proved his Messiahship; so too Paul, as one to whom the risen Christ had visibly appeared; compare John 15:27; 19:35; 21:24; Acts 23:11; 1 Cor. 15:15; 1 John 1:2, compare Acts 1:22f; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31; 26:16; . . . (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft).

Even in the first century not all were witnesses of Jesus Christ. Not all could testify. Peter, at the house of Cornelius, said,

And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:39-43).

Paul was an apostle and inspired of the Holy Spirit to testify of his conversion (Acts 22, 26). We can preach his testimony, encouraging others to do what he did, but we are

not authorized to “get up and testify” of our experiences. Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:2-4). He did not tell him to get up and testify.

To testify, or tell of how God has worked in his/her life, is subjective. The Baptist gets up and tells how God saved him; the Methodist may do the same; the Pentecostal tells how God worked in his life; even some ignorant members of the church of Christ want to get up and tell their experiences. But the testimony of the church member carries no more weight or authority than any sectarian’s testimony. People need to be shown from the Scriptures what a man must do in order to be saved. They do not need to hear someone’s personal testimony.

For a man to get up and testify of how God saved him is to promote one’s self. Paul said, “For we preach not ourselves, but, Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5.) We need to preach Christ, the word, the gospel, the faith, the doctrine of Christ and leave personal testimonies out of the picture. We are not to exalt ourselves, but we are to preach the gospel to others (Mark 16:15-16).

Let us leave testimonials to the sectarian bodies that base their salvation on their feelings rather than the truth of God’s word. Such testimonials should not even be once named among those who are members of the church of Christ.

Let’s get back to the Old Paths.

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*From The Informer, May 25, 2003*

## History of the Church Through the Ages

by Robert H. Brumback

A highly regarded work by a gospel preacher, this book presents the history of our Lord’s church from the Apostolic Age, through the Apostasies, the Dark Ages, the Reformation, and the Restoration.

#13930

# The Value of Godly Women

Andrew Mitchell

**Her value to the world:** As the saying goes “A woman’s work is never done.” Have you ever considered what it

would cost you if you had to hire someone to do all the work that she does for you and your children? Here are the mean hourly wages (U.S., 2000) for some of the jobs she does without pay:

- General Managers (\$33.76/hour)
- Public Relations Managers (\$29.54/hour)
- Purchasing Managers (\$27.64/hour)
- Lodging Managers (\$16.73/hour)
- Financial Managers (\$33.89/hour)
- Dieticians and Nutritionists (\$18.76/hour)
- Chefs and head cooks (\$13.73/hour)
- Interior Designers (\$19.55/hour)
- Housekeeping (\$9.17/hour)
- Laundry and Dry-Cleaners (\$7.99/hour)
- Garment Pressers (\$8.14/hour)
- Sewing Machine Operators (\$8.39/hour)
- Tailors and Dressmakers (\$11.20/hour)
- Nurses (\$22.31/hour)
- Recreation Workers (\$9.32/hour)
- Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs (\$9.10/hour)
- School Counselors (\$21.08/hour)
- Health Educators (\$17.61/hour)
- Education Directors (\$14.38/hour)
- Librarian (\$20.54/hour)

- School Teachers (\$41,980/year)

(Bureau of Labor Statistics Data <http://www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm> )

**Her Value to God:** Let the whole world know how much value God places upon a good woman. A virtuous woman’s worth is “far above rubies” (Prov. 31:10). Her meek and quiet spirit is of “great price” in the sight of God (1 Pet. 3:4). People can give houses and wealth, but a prudent wife can only come “from the Lord” (Prov. 19:14).

**Her Value to Her Husband.** Proverbs 12:4 says, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.” His heart “safely trusts in her” (Prov. 31:11). He is to place her worth above his own life (Matt. 5:25) and “show her honor” (1 Pet. 3:7). If he truly values her, he will love her, and protect her from more undo pressure. She has enough chores at home without him shoving more on her by forcing her to do his job of providing for the family (1 Tim. 5:8).

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## “College” continued from front page

cepted by them? Will you give up your confidence to know what should and should not be done? Will you take on a desire to be equal with those around you? Romans 12:1-2 tells us that Christians are not “blenders in,” we are not to imitate the world. We are to be different, set apart and acceptable before God. Paul declared that this expectation of God is a “reasonable” requirement. Those around you may cause you to leave your confidence behind. What will you leave for college?

The college atmosphere offers you the opportunity to leave your foundational understandings behind. You are a Christian, so it is easily ascertained that you believe in God — the Creator and Sustainer of all things (Acts 17:24-27). You know that heaven is prepared for you and your only

way to achieve that great goal is by faithfully serving God through Jesus Christ — who is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:1-6). These points have been foundational beliefs in your life. It is these beliefs that may become the most challenged parts of your life in college. There is an incredible amount of secular humanism permeating our education system. Your professors may mock your faith in God and treat your beliefs as fodder for their jokes. Will you give in? Will you allow the arrogance of humanism to have a place in your mind? 1 Corinthians 1:20-21, sets forth the question you must always have ready in your mind, “Where is the wise?” The wisdom of the world refuses to see God. Do not be deceived by false confidence in “man’s” opinion. God was; God is; God will always be (Rev. 4:8)! Those around you may compel you to leave your beliefs behind. What will you leave for college?

The college atmosphere offers the opportunity to leave



your morality behind. The mass media of our day says, "College is a time for experimentation!" or "You will be away from home. Dad and Mom can't see you. So go for it!" The opportunity is not just a few drinking parties any more. As if that weren't sinful enough, young people are now experimenting in the depths of sin. You may be faced with drugs, alcohol, and all manners of fornication including homosexuality. Galatians 5:19-21 lists the works of the flesh (which seems more like a list of college past times if the mass media's portrayal is even halfway true). There is a high price to pay when dealing with these momentary pleasures, every one of them can bring an end to your life and they surely will sever your soul's relationship with God. Those around you may expect you to leave behind years of moral training? Is that the price you are willing to pay for higher education? What will you leave for college?

Go to school, but please don't leave your self worth. Don't leave the things you have always known. Don't leave the morality that you have been taught. Don't leave your faith, for college. The time to choose is right now. Do not wait until the heat of moment is searing you. Hold fast to your faith; determine in your heart that you will remain faithful to God. He will never let you down. The truth will never change; God will never change and there is no hope for salvation separate from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Use the education system to your advantage. Increase your knowledge; use your education and abilities to further the cause of Christ. Seek to be the best you can be — for God.

The college atmosphere may offer you the opportunity to leave behind most everything that you are. You, however, can be different. You can maintain your confidence, your faith, and your morality. You do not have to give in and become like the world in order to succeed. In fact, as a Christian, you have more success than most of the world will ever know. Do not go backwards. Please don't leave God out of your life for college.

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193 Williams Ave., Norwalk, Ohio

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## “False Teachers” continued from page 2

are *kalodidaskaloi*? Are they persons with good character? Obviously the KJV translators did not think so; they translated the word “teachers of good things.” The ASV translates it “teachers of that which is good.” Apparently the translators understood the word to define the content of what is being taught.

**2. Teachers of the law.** Another word that has the same kind of construction as *pseudodidaskalos* is *nomodidaskalos*, “teachers of the law.” The word appears in three passages in the New Testament:

And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and *doctors of the law* sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them (Luke 5:17).

Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a *doctor of the law*, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space (Acts 5:34).

Desiring to be *teachers of the law*; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm (1 Tim. 1:7).

“Teachers of the law” does not mean teachers whose moral character corresponds to the Mosaic Law. Rather, the word means those whose teaching has for its content the Law of Moses.

**3. Teachers of a different doctrine.** The noun form of this word does not appear in the New Testament, but the verb form *heterodidaskaleo* appears in two places:

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3).

Noun forms of the word appear outside the New Testament. A *heterodidaskalia* is “a teaching of error” and *heterodidaskalos* means “teaching error” (Liddell & Scott 590).

**4. Teacher of holy things.** The word *hierodidaskalos* which also appears outside the New Testament means “a teacher of holy things” (Liddell & Scott 695).

**5. Chorus teacher.** The word *chorodidaskalos* which appears in secular literature means “the person who trained the chorus to dance and sing, so as to prepare it for public performance, the choir master” (Liddell & Scott 1735).

The same grammatical form as appears in the cases mentioned above is used for *pseudodidaskalos*. No wonder Liddell & Scott (1754) and Thayer (675) define the word as a false teacher. Their definition corresponds with the other uses of similar compound words using the word teacher. The word defines the content of what is taught, not the moral character of the one who is teaching it.

### Conclusion

Until recent years brethren clearly understood that false teacher meant one who teaches what is false. When we applied the term to men such as Billy Graham and the Pope, we were not assaulting their moral character; we were challenging the content of what they preach. Since brother

Hailey taught his doctrine on divorce and remarriage, men have been actively working to redefine the word “false teacher” so that it means the character of the teacher, not the content of what is taught. Then a very subtle change occurs. Those who examine the teachings of a brother, expose his doctrine as false, and call upon brethren to mark such a man (Rom. 16:17-18) are identified as men of bad character (not teachers of false doctrine). They are identified as factious men in the sense of Titus 3:10-11 and, because their character is bad, they are the “false teachers.” The result is that the one who teaches the truth is a false teacher and the one who teaches error is not a false teacher! The one who teaches the truth is to be exposed, quarantined, and ex-communicated. The one who teaches error is pictured as the hero who rides into the sunset on a great white stallion wearing his white hat. The one who

exposes his error is picture as a dastardly villain taking potshots as the great hero of faith (for an example of this portrayal, see Ed Harrell’s book, *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey’s Personal Journey of Faith*). Isaiah described such when he wrote, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isa. 5:20).

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## Field Reports



**Alameda, CA:** The congregation that meets in Alameda California has a new preacher. Brother Olen Holderby who preached here for the last seven years has moved out of town and is now meeting with the congregation that meets in Lodi, California. Our new preacher is Guillermo Alvarez. Brother Alvarez and his family have just moved to the Bay Area and began to work with this congregation in August 2003. If you are visiting the California Bay Area and would like to meet with us, our meeting address is 2167 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda CA 94501, (510) 523-9547. Our meeting times are: Sundays: Bible Study 9:45 a.m.; morning worship 10:50 a.m.; evening worship 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30 p.m. **Submitted by Guillermo Alvarez.**

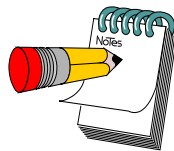
“In an unexpected shift in the electoral landscape, polls show that public support of gay rights in general, and of ‘civil unions’ for same-sex couples in particular, has fallen about 10 percentage points since the court’s June 26 ruling.

“Leaders of the Christian Right say this is because Americans have realized that the legalization of gay marriage, which once seemed remote, is suddenly a real possibility.

“Any day now, the highest court in Massachusetts will rule on a case that could make that state the first to allow gay couples to marry. Last month gay Americans began flocking to Canada for marriage licenses, and in the next week Episcopalians may risk a schism by voting to develop a blessing for gay couples.

“Both religious conservatives and gay rights activists see these events pushing the definition of marriage onto the national agenda. Before long, they say, Americans will have to decide whether marriage is fundamentally a civil or religious institution, and whether it is really about procreation or commitment.

## Quips & Quotes



**Sodomy Ruling Fuels Shift in Politics**  
 “Washington Post, Alan Cooperman — When the Supreme Court struck down a Texas law against sodomy a month ago, religious conservatives viewed the decision as a terrible defeat. But now, they increasingly think it has handed them a winning political issue: opposition to gay marriage.

“. . . More than a dozen religious broadcasters and Christian political organizations — including James Dobson, D. James Kennedy, Pat Robertson, the Family Research Council, and Traditional Values Coalition and Concerned Women for America — are pushing for a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union of one man and one woman.

“.. ‘The Republicans are sitting on a major weapon and are not using it,’ said Robert Knight, director of the Culture and Family Institute, a conservative think tank.

“Knight said the president is ‘getting very bad advice from the Big Tent folks’ who fear that campaigning for a constitutional ban would spoil Bush’s effort to build a compassionate, inclu-

sive image for the Republican Party.

"The issue's sudden emergence also has put Democratic presidential candidates on the spot. Most have endorsed civil unions but opposed gay marriage" (Houston Chronicle [August 1, 2003], 11A).

### Compromise on Same-sex Unions Approved at Episcopal Meeting

"Cathy Lynn Grossman — The Episcopal Church gave official recognition to same-sex unions Thursday, two days after ratifying the church's first open gay bishop.

"The church's House of Deputies, made up of lay leaders and priests, approved a resolution recognizing such ceremonies without 'condoning or endorsing' them, church spokesman James Solheim said. Laity and priests voted separately by diocese. The resolution was passed by the lay leaders, 58-35, and priests, 62-34.

"The House of Bishops had recognized same-sex unions on Wednesday. The ceremonies are widespread in the 23-million-member Episcopal Church. Bishop Keith Ackerman of Quincy, Ill., described the resolution as 'recognition without approval' that allows bishops to continue to set local policy.

"Supporters said the effect was to take gay unions out of the closet. 'This is a step forward for the church,' said the Rev. Susan Russell, director of Claiming the Blessing, a group campaigning for an Episcopal liturgy blessing same-sex unions. All Saints Church in Pasadena, Calif., where she is an associate pastor, has held such ceremonies for 11 years" (USA Today [August 8, 2003], 3A).

### Anglican Leader Calls Summit

"London — The archbishop of Canterbury on Friday called an emergency meeting of the world's Anglican leaders to discuss the approval of a gay American bishop, seeking compromise amid much talk of schism and few hints of compromise.

"Archbishop Rowan Williams, leader of the 77 million-member Anglican Communion, acted three days after the U.S. Episcopal Church confirmed the election of the Rev. V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson is an openly gay priest whose nomination drew criticism from conservative Anglican leaders around the world" (The Indianapolis Star [August 9, 2003], A10).

### Congress Bans Partial-Birth Abortions

"Pro-life Christians are hailing the first significant abortion restriction in the 30 years since Roe v. Wade. On June 4 the U.S. House of Representatives voted 282 to 189 to ban partial-birth abortion. The Senate voted 64 to 33 in March to ban the procedure.

"Both Houses passed similar bills twice before. Former President Clinton vetoed them . . ." (Christianity Today [August 2003], 19).

### Watch That Invocation

"Praying in Jesus' name at California city council meetings is now illegal.

Since 1953 the city of Burbank had allowed members of a nondenominational ministerial association to open its council meetings with prayer. But Irv Rubin, the late chairman of the Jewish Defense League, filed suit in 1999 after a Mormon leader prayed in the name of Jesus Christ.

"A California Superior Court judge ruled in November 2000 in Rubin v. City of Burbank that sectarian prayer at a city council meeting violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

"The United States Supreme Court declined on May 19 to hear what would have been the second appeal of the decision.

"John Whitehead, president of the Rutherford Institute, called Burbank a knee-jerk case of religious discrimination. Whitehead told Christianity Today that Burbank officials had created a public forum by providing leaders of all religious communities an opportunity to pray.

"It's a total misconstruction of the Constitution,' Whitehead said. 'Once you create a public forum for speakers, you can't discriminate on the basis of religion'" (Christianity Today [August 2003], 25).

### Battle for the Bone Box

"Israel — The bone box is authentic, but the inscription ('James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus') is not. That's the conclusion of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) after its examination of a celebrated ossuary that Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR) unveiled last October (CT, Nov. 18, 2002, p. 38).

"The inscription is a fake,' director Shuka Dorfman said at a June news conference in Jerusalem.

"But BAR editor Hershel Shanks and Asbury Seminary professor Ben Witherington, coauthors of The Brother of Jesus, a 2003 book about the ossuary, disagree" (Christianity Today [August 2003], 28).

