



# The Facts About Entering Heaven

David Dann

The word “heaven” is often used in the Bible to describe the spiritual dwelling place of God (1 Kings 8:30). Additionally, the Scriptures teach that the hope of the Christian is to be in heaven with God for eternity. The apostle Peter writes of “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4). The hope of being in heaven for all eternity is certainly the “one hope” to which Paul refers in Ephesians 4:4.

While it is clear that heaven is a wonderful reward, there are some aspects of this reward that may not be so clearly understood. For example, we need to come to an understanding of just who exactly can expect to enter into heaven. Christ spoke on this very point when he said:

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice

lawlessness!” (Matt. 7:21-23).

It is obvious from this passage that there are some facts we need to be aware of with regard to entering into heaven.

## 1. Not everyone will enter heaven.

Jesus begins by saying, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven” (v. 21). Unfortunately, many people seem to have the idea that the Lord will somehow cave in and just let us all into heaven in the end. Polls that are taken show that most people believe in heaven while

only a very small percentage believes in hell. However, we cannot help but conclude from what Christ said that many will not enter into heaven. The apostle Paul affirms this conclusion, saying, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

## 2. Not everyone who calls Jesus

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## The Bible Doctrine of Hell

### (1)

Mike Willis

The Bible speaks of the eternal punishment of the wicked in such verses as the following:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:22).

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Matt. 5:29-30).

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28; cf. Luke 12:5).

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Matt. 18:9).

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23:33).

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: . . . And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire (Mark 9:43, 45, 47).

Harry Buis said, “The fact that the loving and wise Savior has more to say about hell than any other individual in the Bible is certainly thought-provoking” (quoted by Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* 266). How ironic that “Christ tells us more about hell, and He is the one we use see “Hell” on p. 89



# Weakness and Weak Brethren

Mark Mayberry

### Introduction

In this lesson, let us consider what the Bible says on the subject of weakness. God's word speaks of those who are weak in conscience and in faith; it refers to the weakness of the flesh, and also describes those who are spiritually weak. Yet, none of these conditions should be constant or chronic. No one is justified by saying, "I am weak. I will forever be weak. Therefore, I am excused." Rather, we are commanded to grow in grace, faith, and knowledge (Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17-18). In each case, in the very context that discusses weakness, we also learn that God has made provision for the weak to become strong.

### Weak in Conscience

In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul discusses those who are weak in conscience regarding meat that had been sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:1-12). Apparently, such individuals came from a Gentile background. Prior to their conversion, they had worshiped in the idol's temple, and in various ways, had honored false gods. Now that they were Christians, how should they view such matters? What position should they take regarding meat that had been offered in sacrifice to an idol? Paul affirms the truth that the idol is nothing, and meat formerly used in idolatrous worship is clean. Yet, not all men have this knowledge. Therefore, caution is in order. Paul admonished the brethren to treat one another with deference. He said, "Don't violate your own conscience, or do anything that would cause a fellow Christian to violate theirs." The Corinthian disciples were to be helpful and supportive towards one another. Furthermore, they were to avoid any actions that would imply an endorsement of idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14-33).

Having emphasized the need for forbearance, let us recognize that weakness should not be a permanent state. God has made provision for the weak to become strong. True, a man should not violate his conscience, but one's conscience should be reflective of a continually growing basis of knowledge. Ignorance may lead us to object to things that are not objectionable. Ignorance may also lead us to participate in things that are sinful and wrong. However, with continued growth, both of these problems should be corrected. The conscience operates according to what it has been taught, and it must be constantly instructed according to the Word of God (1 Tim. 1:5; 3:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:18).

### Weak in Faith

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In Romans 14, Paul discusses those who are weak in faith regarding the eating of meats and the observing of days. Apparently such individuals came from a Jewish background. Throughout their lives, they had been taught that certain meats were to be regarded as unclean and certain days treated as holy. Now they are Christians. How should they view such matters? Paul affirms the truth that all meats are clean and days are equal. The solution is in the context. Yet, not all have this knowledge. Therefore, caution is in order. Again, Paul admonished the brethren to treat one another with deference: “Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.” Further, he repeated the admonition, “Don’t violate your own conscience, or do anything that would cause fellow Christians to violate theirs” (Rom. 14:1-4, 13-23).

Nevertheless, let us recognize that weakness should not be a perpetual condition. God has made provision for the weak to become strong. Once more, the solution is in the context. Here, as well as in other places, God’s word affirms that meats are clean and days (other than the Lord’s day) are insignificant (Acts 10:9-16; Col. 2:16-17; 1 Tim. 4:1-5). The weak brother is mistaken in his beliefs. Now that he has been properly instructed, he should accept God’s revelation on the subject. Granted, sometimes it takes a while for teaching to sink in, but in time, his conscientious convictions should reflect this newfound understanding of God’s word.

How tragic that in recent years this passage has been used in defense of Homer Hailey, an aged and learned brother, who taught error on marriage-divorce-and-remarriage. Those brethren who would employ Romans 14 in defense of brother Hailey must, of necessity, categorize him as the weak brother who misunderstands God’s will, as opposed to the strong brother who knows the truth. Such application is mistaken on two fronts: (1) Although the context of Romans 14 speaks of things that are morally neutral, it has been improperly applied to matters of serious and doctrinal import. Can one commit fornication “to the Lord”? Is adultery “clean”? Are unscriptural marriages matters of moral indifference? Obviously not. (2) The weak brother of Romans 14 is expected to accept God’s revelation on the disputed subject: Meats are clean and days are nothing. Hopefully, in time, his conscience will reflect this newfound understanding. Ultimately, it matters not whether he eats meats or refrains from such, but he must accept the truth of God. The weak brother is not to remain weak forever.

How amazing, therefore, that this passage has been used in defense of an aged warrior of the cross who has held an erroneous position of marriage-divorce-and-remarriage for over 50 years. First of all, his doctrine allows men and women in unscriptural marriages to remain in a state of adultery. The eternal consequences of such teaching are grave (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21). Secondly, despite the repeated and prolonged efforts of faithful men,

brother Hailey showed absolutely no willingness to change his position. How could such an individual be called a weak brother? If by some stretch of the imagination, the term could be properly applied, then we must ask, “How much time is required for a weak brother to become strong”? Obviously, we should give individuals time to come to a knowledge of the truth. However, if fifty years is not sufficient, how much time is required? Seventy-five years? One hundred? Patience demands that we allow adequate time for study, correction, and restoration. No one is advocating rashness. However, if longsuffering requires 50, 75, or 100 years, then the bounds of Christian fellowship can never effectively be drawn. If such a rule were applied to the restorative efforts of a local congregation, no disciplinary action would ever be forthcoming (Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10-11; etc.).

### **Weak in Flesh**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made reference to the weakness of the flesh (Matt. 26:36-41; Mark 14:32-38). Indeed, honesty demands that we acknowledge, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” However, is this an excuse of permanent weakness? Is this a justification for continually sinning? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? May it never be! How shall those who have died to sin still live in it (Rom. 6:1-2)? Instead, the solution is in the context: Here, as in other passages, watchfulness and prayer are essential to overcoming temptation (Acts 20:31-32; 1 Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2-4). If we are watchful and constant in prayer, we will be prepared to meet Satan’s assault; however, if we are negligent and forgetful, we will be overthrown (1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:7-10).

### **Weak in Spirit**

In a variety of verses, the Scriptures speak of those who are spiritually weak. Indeed, there are many in this condition. Yet, how does one move from a state of weakness to a state of spiritual strength? The solution is in the context: Paul encouraged the Ephesian elders to “assist” the weak (Acts 20:35). The Thessalonians are told to patiently “help” the weak (1 Thess. 5:14). In writing to the Corinthians, Paul not only referred to their weakness, but repeatedly alluded to the source of spiritual strength, the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 13:1-10).

### **Conclusion**

We have discussed those who are weak in conscience, in faith, in flesh, and in spirit. Weakness is a reality, but God does not want us to remain in this state perpetually. He wants us to become strong. Strength is derived from sharing a genuine relationship with God, and abiding in his word. In admonishing Joshua to “be strong and courageous,” God said, “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then

# “My Soul Takes Refuge in You”

Bart Campbell

Have you ever been situation where troubles were beseeching you on every side? What did you feel like doing about it? When David was fleeing for his life at the time that King Saul was trying to kill him, what he felt like doing at that moment was to worship God. Do you think of doing that when you have troubles?

The word that is translated “worship” in our Bibles is a word that means “an act of homage or reverence, to do reverence toward.” When David wrote Psalm 57, he felt that the only place he could take refuge at that time was with God (vv.1-3). He honestly felt that he was fleeing for his life. “My soul is among lions . . . Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword” (v. 4). David then praised God because of the love that God had manifested to David (vv. 5-10). David then said: “Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let your glory be above all the earth” (v. 11). David gave homage and reverence to God when his life was in jeopardy.

Why it is that at times when we are overwhelmed by troubles and anxieties, we choose to stay home instead of going to church and worshipping God? Why is it that when we are confronted with problems, we do not think of worshipping God at that moment?

A true servant of God worships him because of the love and appreciation that he has for his Creator. David reflected that attitude in Psalm 122:1. Early Christians reflected that attitude in Acts 2:46. They reflected that attitude when they were being persecuted in Acts 5:41.

When Jesus had a conversation with a scribe, that scribe asked him: “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus responded with these words, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:28, 30).

The worship that we offer to God, even when confronted with problems, ought to reflect the joy and happiness that we feel for him. To remind ourselves of that when confronted with troubles might help us deal with them and remember that God is with us throughout them all, provided that we maintain a right relationship with him.

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*Globe, Arizona*

you will have success” (Josh. 1:6-9). The Corinthians were admonished to “be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). The Ephesians were exhorted to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” They did this by putting on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-13). Timothy was told, “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” He did this by abiding in the foundational message of truth, and sharing it with others (2 Tim. 2:1-2). John said, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one” (1 John 2:14). This,

brethren, is the key! Like the heroes of Hebrews chapter 11, by faith we can from weakness be made strong (Heb. 11:32-34). Through faith in God’s revealed word, we can be sound, knowledgeable, and, ultimately, victorious.

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## Sermon on the Mount (2)

Jim McDonald

# “Blessed Are They That Mourn”

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The second beatitude from Matthew 5 is paradoxical in nature. It says, “Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4). Luke puts it like this: “Blessed are ye that weep now for you shall laugh.” James wrote: “Be afflicted and mourn and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness” (Jas. 4:9). The “mourner” of whom Jesus spake is not just any kind of a “mourner.” Jesus gives no promise that all mourners will be comforted. Ahab wept because Naboth would not sell him his family’s heritage. Judas wept because he had sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Alexander the Great mourned because he had no more worlds to conquer. All these mourned for the wrong reason and no comfort came to them. *The mourner who will be comforted is he who mourns because of his sins.*

There are two kinds of mourning or sorrow; one of which will produce repentance, while the other will not. Paul spoke of these two kinds of sorrow when he wrote “Godly sorrow worketh repentance, a repentance which bringeth no regret, but a sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). There are some who are remorseful for their sins but not for the proper reason; they mourn because their sins have caught up with them. King Saul mourned for his sins and even confessed them, yet his mourning was not of the right motive and did not lead to repentance.

When mourners mourn for the wrong reason, the next step is to become unable to even mourn at all. Such become “untouchables.” They have seared their conscience and are past feeling (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:19). Those in such a condition have hardened their hearts and are unable to blush. One may have done something so wicked that his face should turn all shades of red but his heart is so calloused by his persistency in sin that he feels neither embarrassment nor shame! (Matt. 13:15, Jer. 8:12). Woe to such an one! For such a hardened sinner, there is little or no hope at all.

It is therefore a blessed man who can see that he has sinned and has profound sorrow that he did. David committed a shameful thing by committing adultery with Bathsheba. Sin being what it is, leads to further sin and so

it was in David’s case. Their adultery caused Bathsheba to conceive and David, anxious to cover over his sin, recalled Bathsheba’s husband from the war front in hopes that husband might sleep with his wife and the child she had already conceived by David might be “palmed” off as that of Uriah’s. The scheme did not work so David plotted Uriah’s death and when that was accomplished, took Bathsheba as his wife. The plot might have worked except for the intervention of the Lord who sees all things and mourned because of the fall of this man who was “a man after his own heart.” The Lord revealed to Nathan the prophet David’s sin. He confronted David and told him, “Thou art the man.” David’s heart smote him and he confessed, “Against thee, thee only have I sinned.” David could mourn. Yes, his sins had found him out; but he could and did mourn with a godly sorrow. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness.” God forgave David when he saw that David’s sorrow and penitence was real. Such also was the sorrow Peter had when he denied he knew the Lord. The publican also had a genuine sorrow. He would not “lift his eyes toward God but smote himself on his breast and said, God be thou merciful to me, a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

Our sins cause our Lord much sorrow. When we are negligent and forget or refuse to live as Christians should or to assemble with the saints, the heart of Jesus is greatly grieved. We know how we ought to live, and we know we ought to come to worship (Heb. 10:25). What is our attitude when we fail in these respects? Does our conscience trouble us? Are we sorrowful and confess to God our regret and sins and vow to him that we will henceforth live a godly life and take every opportunity to worship and serve him? Brethren, we are treading indeed on dangerous ground when we cannot sorrow for our sins for we must mourn that we might repent, and we must repent that we might not perish! (Luke 13:3).

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Bill Cavender

## “Watersheds” and Their Aftermaths

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*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (1996 edition) defines “water-shed” as “the ridge or crest line dividing two drainage areas; water parting; divide; 2. the region or area drained by a river, stream, etc.; drainage area. 4. an important point of division or transition between two phases, conditions, etc.”

Periodically, throughout the history of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God in our goodly land, the United States of America, there have been “watershed” events, “important point(s) of division or transition between two phases, conditions, etc.” Those brethren who lived and taught God’s will truthfully, or taught their errors sincerely and ignorantly, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not live to see the *aftermaths*, the results of their “watershed” teachings and works. No man’s lifetime is long enough for him to see and realize whether the end is better than the beginning (Eccl. 7:8-10). Only through the hind sights of history can “watershed” events be seen and identified as having been such.

That generation of people in Israel who came after the days of Moses, Joshua, Eleazar, Caleb, etc. “knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judg. 2:10). They thought, as every succeeding generation does, that their thoughts and their ways were better and superior to those of the previous generations (Isa. 55:8-9). They did not live to see a divided and apostate Israel, a people prepared only for punishment and banishment; a non-entity, non-productive, godless nation fitted only for destruction. That nation, which began with such mighty manifestations of Jehovah’s power, by signs, miracles, and wonders, in Egypt, at Sinai, and in Canaan, and by his revelation of his mind, precepts and commandments at Sinai, gradually turned to men, to human wisdom, to false teachers, to idolatry, to immorality, and became “a hiss and a by-word”

to a sinful world instead of “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” as Jehovah intended (Exod. 19:5-6). They, as a nation and people, confirmed the multitude of nations whom they influenced, in sin and error instead of keeping alive in the world the knowledge of the one true God and his divine will. This did not happen to Israel in a day but over several generations.

Many great and good men and women lived in the two centuries in the USA prior to our present generation, advocating a return to the Bible, to “restore” primitive, New Testament “Christianity.” There were many, many “watershed” events. In the hind sights of history, some were:

**1. The recognition of, and cooperation with, the followers of Barton W. Stone and many other preachers in Kentucky, especially, and the followers of the Campbells and many other preachers in western Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, during the 1830s.**

**2. The founding of schools and colleges by brethren, such as Bacon College in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1836, which later was moved to Harrodsburg, and in 1859 was given a new name, Kentucky University.** In 1865 it became the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Bethany College in northwestern Virginia, in the community of Bethany, with Alexander Campbell as the president and Andrew F. Ross, Charles Stuart, Robert Richardson, W.K. Pendleton, and Campbell as the faculty, began in October 1841. (I hope to devote an entire essay later in this series to Bethany College.) Franklin College began in January 1845, on the farm of Tolbert Fanning southeast of Nashville, Tennessee. (He was also the founder of the *Gospel Advocate* paper in Nashville in 1855.) In 1857 David Lipscomb joined the board of directors. This college became the progenitor of the Nashville Bible School and of David Lipscomb College.



Many other schools and colleges are to be found in the history of our brethren in this country. No school or college has remained true to the original purposes, concepts, and ideals of the founders and brethren who began them and who first supported them.

**3. The founding of the American Christian Missionary Society in Cincinnati, Ohio, in October 1849, mainly through the influence of Alexander Campbell and D.S. Burnet.** One hundred fifty-six brethren came together and formed this human society, representing that many, and more, congregations. Campbell wrote: "There is now heard from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, one general, if not universal, call for a more efficient organization of our churches" (*Millennial Harbinger* [February 1849], 90). There was intense opposition to this society from the beginning. Debates began, writers in papers argued, lines were drawn, and divisions rapidly became apparent among brethren. The "society advocates" never relented nor retreated, but pushed their project to inevitable division among the brethren.

**4. The introduction of a mechanical instrument of music, a melodeon, into the worship of the church in Midway, Kentucky in 1859-1860 (I do not have the exact date before me as I write these words; my books are elsewhere), L.L. Pinkerton being the preacher.** This topic began being discussed among brethren about 1851, died down, revived again in the 1859-60 period, declined again during the Civil War years of 1861-1865, but began being discussed with much fervor from 1865 onward. One writer estimated that there were about ten thousand congregations of "disciples" in the USA at the time of the Civil War. Many churches which endorsed and supported the Missionary Society, in succeeding came to use the instrument in worship, especially in the northern churches. Most churches in the southern states did not endorse or support the Missionary Society or mechanical instruments of music in worship. Alexander Campbell, John W. McGarvey, Moses E. Lard, Robert Milligan, and many prominent brethren did not endorse the instruments in worship. Lard and McGarvey were labeled as "extremists" by the endorsers of instrumental music in worship.

**5. In the early years of the twentieth century, "pre-millennialism" became a divisive issue among brethren, continuing until the years of World War II, 1939-1945.** The rise of Italy (one of the three Axis Powers — Germany, Italy, Japan) as a political and military power in Europe, under Benito Mussolini, contributed to the consideration of this theory. The doctrine involves "the resurrection and restoration of the Roman Empire." The theory is that Jesus came to earth the first time during Roman rule to set up his kingdom. The Jews rejected him as their Messiah (King). Failing in his mission, Jesus established the church as a substitute, went back to heaven, and we now live in "the church

age" in which a "gospel of grace" is preached. Therefore, Jesus is not now on David's throne and is not a king, in fact and in act, in deed and in truth. He will come back at a later time when Rome rules again as the last great world power, will gather all the Jews back to Palestine and Jerusalem, will establish his kingdom on earth, and will rule on David's earthly throne in Jerusalem for one thousand years. The temple will be rebuilt and old Testament worship will be resumed. There are various and differing facets to this theory. Robert H. Boll became the best known advocate of this theory in the thirties and forties. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was the best known opposer of these false ideas. Fortunately, "premillennialism" never was widely accepted nor believed among brethren. Adherents were found in the Louisville, Kentucky, southern Indiana, and south Louisiana areas, for the most part. With the downfall of Italy and Mussolini, and the power of the gospel as faithful men opposed the false doctrine, this theory greatly diminished.

**6. After World War II, "watershed" problems were the issues of (a) local church support, maintenance, and subsidization of human agencies and institutions (such as schools, colleges, children's homes, aged homes, unwed mother's homes, and (b) centralization of local church work, funds, and planning of programs of work into the hands of, and under the oversight of centralized, sponsoring churches and elderships.** Beginning in the sixties, the issues of "the social gospel" were discussed with much vigor as local churches began to have church-sponsored entertainment, parties, "fellowship meals," youth programs, kitchens, dining facilities, youth ministries, aged ministries, bus ministries, family-life centers, athletic programs, etc.

**7. In my judgment, in my years of trying to preach the gospel of Christ, 1947 until the present, there have been two major "watershed" events which changed the course of the churches and brethren's spirit and behavior toward each other:** (a) the letters and articles in the *Gospel Advocate* in November-December 1954, encouraging the *Advocate* and its editor, brother B.C. Goodpasture, to take the lead in "a quarantine" of brethren and preachers who did not endorse the theories, programs, and practices mentioned in number 6 above, and who would preach or write in opposition to these programs and theories, and (b) the series of seventeen articles in *Christianity Magazine*, 1988-1990, by brother David Edwin Harrell, taking the position that one can, with God's approval, endorse a man who teaches false doctrine while rejecting his false teaching (namely brother Homer Hailey, now deceased, and his false teachings regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage), re-defining *who* and *what* a false teacher is, and that Romans 14 is the basis for fellowship among brethren who may differ over many doctrinal and moral issues and problems, especially marriage, divorce, and remarriage. These articles, and *Christianity Magazine* itself, the very

spirit and thrust of the editors and content of the paper, in my judgment, have had a devastating effect upon a generation of churches and brethren, especially younger preachers and brethren, and has contributed to an unparalleled spirit of compromise and doctrinal softness among us.

Through the years I have tried to do much reading of "Restoration History," such as the *Christian Baptist*, *Millennial Harbinger*, *Lard's Quarterlies*, *Search for the Ancient Order*, *American Christian Review*, etc. In my memory I cannot recall any effort by and among brethren, except that effort in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1954, to deliberately, willfully, and maliciously precipitate a wholesale division among brethren and churches, to advise, encourage, and actively promote strife, separations, and alienations among brethren. As a general rule, through the years, good brethren have urged patience, forbearance, thinking, study, discussion, debate, kindness, and brotherly love in times of differences, problems, and "issues." Not so with the *Gospel Advocate* and B.C. Goodpasture. From November-December 1954, onward, for years, that paper, its editor, and its regular staff, initiated a "full-court press" to mark, quarantine, and alienate "the antis." As the controversies developed and progressed, it became more and more obvious, at least to me, that these are the only alternatives the pro-institutional, pro-centralized programs, pro-social gospel brethren have had. They did not have scripture(s), they did not have apostolic and divine precedents for their projects and activities, they had to argue from "expedients," "where there is no pattern," "component parts and constituent elements," and that "these are only matters of opinion." I saw and read much of the same types and kinds of seasonings and argumentations in the "Missionary Society" and "Instrumental Music in Worship" controversies, debates, and writings in the 1850s to early 1900s.

I was a young man and a young preacher in those days in 1954. God being my witness, I wanted only to preach the gospel of Christ, save lost souls of my fellow human beings, build and edify churches of my Lord, have a good family life, and be an influence for good. I did not want to teach any error, I did not want to build again "human denominationalism" which I grew up in as a Methodist and left when I was in my twentieth year, and I did not want to participate in division and strife. I listened, I read, I studied, and I prayed as these controversies grew in numbers and in intensity. I was preaching in the Middle Tennessee area where the influences of the *Gospel Advocate*, David Lipscomb College, Tennessee Orphans Home, and other human institutions were the strongest and most influential. Marinel and I moved to Texas in 1951, after four years of preaching in Tennessee, and we found the same "issues," problems, and controversies developing in the "Lone Star State." There was no getting away from the programs, projects, pressures, and promotions of the brethren and churches, papers and institutions, which were "going

all-out" for money, projects, centralized and sponsoring elders and programs, and the building of human, civil-law authorized institutions and agencies. The "brotherhood" was brim-full of ideas and plans — if brethren and churches would just supply the money! Religious beggars were all over the country among our brethren. How quickly the churches of Christ were changing, from what I had read about in the old papers in the thirties and forties, after the "Missionary Society," "Instrumental Music," "Premillennialism," controversies and separations, and what the churches appeared to me to be in the late forties when I began to preach.

There were able, well-versed, talented preachers on both sides of these issues, famous brethren whose names I had been reading in the papers ever since I had become acquainted with churches of Christ. I would go to hear these well-known men speak and preach every opportunity I had or could make. I attended "lectureships" at David Lipscomb College, Freed-Hardeman College, and Abilene Christian College. I attended gospel meetings. I heard many debates and semi-private discussions. As brother Hardeman used to say, "Larger ships may venture more, little boats should stay near shore." I was a "little boat" (and still am). I tried to listen, to think, to study, and to learn. I came back from Texas every summer to hold several gospel meetings in Tennessee. I was fortunate, in my very earliest years, in 1947-1951, to have invitations to preach in gospel meetings in Middle Tennessee. These churches kept asking me to come back for additional meetings in the next year or two, well into the 1950s. I began to get invitations to hold meetings for Texas churches in those years. These were busy years for a young preacher beginning his family and wanting to do all the good he could. But the controversies were getting sharper, by 1955 brethren were getting more divisive and more and more "the antis" were being marked, avoided, ostracized, "cut off" and "cut out."

My attitudes and practices in those early years were to be patient and kind with brethren, preach the truth of the New Testament, and expose the errors of men as best I could, be plain and clear as to what I believed to be right and true and where I stood, and then let the brethren do the dividing and the alienating, if they chose to do so. This is still my thinking and practice, to the best of my ability and knowledge. And they did! As time went on, and by the year of 1960, I had been pretty well "black-balled" by the very brethren and churches who had so kindly and lovingly endorsed, helped, encouraged, and given me multiple opportunities for service to Jesus Christ in the first decade of my life as a preacher.

In those years of 1947-1960, I came to several conclusions and convictions which have been lifelong and have affected the course of my life: (1) That the more able, Bible-oriented, stay-with-the-Scriptures, brethren were

## Teachers of the Will of God

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Israel had begun returning from the Babylonian captivity. Ezra and Nehemiah had taken a lead in bringing the people back to God. They set forth God's will before the people. They wanted them to turn to God, to do the will of God, and to be followers of God. But now, could they do so if the people did not know what God expected of them? Ezra the scribe (and others) was well qualified, but before the people could be loyal to God, some other steps had to be taken first.

**First and foremost, Ezra had to prepare himself.** In Ezra 7:10 we read, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." The first step of preparation is that one must *know* what he believes and where it can be found. In this, we become answerable directly to God. Paul wrote Timothy to "study to show thyself approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). Peter reminds us that we are to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Unless we prepare to be teachers (Heb. 5:12), we will not succeed in leading men far enough to become solidly based upon the word of God. This is true of *any* who teach — preachers,

elders, class teachers, or even individuals. And so "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord." He was determined to know what the will of God was.

**Secondly, he also sought to "do it."** To *know* something and to be able to *teach* it isn't always the same thing. No one wants to hear a hypocrite tell him what one must do, while he himself makes no effort to live as God would have him. This doesn't mean he has to be "sinlessly perfect," but he has to have the will of God as his motivation. If he is preaching for money, popularity, or to impose his will upon others, men will soon recognize his lack of sincerity and turn away. This was true when Israel turned away from the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 2:24-25), though some followed them down the paths of sin. Is it any wonder that Paul wrote to Timothy to "be thou an example" (1 Tim. 4:12), and that if he would "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16). Indeed there is a lesson here for anyone who desires to teach others about the word of God! Ezra prepared his heart both to know the will of God well enough to teach it to others, and then to so live that men would heed that which he had to say.

Now, note the methods that these teachers used in Ne-

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"the antis." (2) That the better debaters, better preachers of Scripture, who would not add to or take from the New Testament, were "the antis." (3) That the more sacrificial, lovers-of-the-kingdom-of-God and the church as God purposed and revealed it in the Scriptures, were "the antis." (4) That the brethren who would not take the churches into denominationalism and error were "the antis." (5) That those who better understood the nature of the eternal kingdom of God, purposed, prophesied, and promised in the Old Testament and revealed and preached in the New Testament, were "the antis." (6) That those who were less interested in fame, position, money, and salaries, and "big churches" to preach for, were "the antis." (7) And that those

who would best help me to be a faithful preacher and person, a good steward of the manifold grace of God, were "the antis." Out of faith and convictions, I have been numbered among "the antis," as the *Gospel Advocate* tagged us and "quarantined" us years ago, all my years as a Christian, as a preacher, and as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, the church of our Lord. My intention is to remain such until my journey in this world is concluded. (To be continued)

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hemiah 8:8. First they “read in the book of the law of God distinctly.” They didn’t appeal to “what I think,” to what “the church believes,” to what “we have always done,” or to “let me tell you a story about my experiences.” They didn’t turn to the leading religious leaders, or the standards of society that “everybody thinks” is OK. They went to *the law of the Lord!* Isaiah says, “To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). There is no way one can do the will of God unless he first of all learns what God expects of him (Matt. 7:21-23, 1 Cor. 2:11), and the only place one is going to find that is in the law of God! To do this, we must read God’s word (Rom. 10:17). Unfortunately, too many in the world today never understand the word of God simply because they are more willing to listen to stories about the Bible than to read the Bible itself. They like to hear what others say about the Bible being a “good book,” but it is not “good” enough to occupy their time. These teachers made sure the people heard directly what the word of the Lord had to say.

Next, the Bible says they read it “distinctly.” They read it so all could hear, they read it so they clearly understood the words, and they read it all! They didn’t blur over the unfavorable parts, or skip the parts that might bring opposition, or number those parts they didn’t like themselves. Again, Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word . . . in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2). Some are willing to read the easy parts, but skip over the others, to ignore words they may not fully understand, or to not bother to compare one passage with another on the same topic (thus ending up with only half of the picture). These teachers wanted to be sure the people didn’t *misunderstand* what was being read. They wanted to be sure they got every word “distinctly.”

## Answers For Our Hope

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Then they “gave the sense” (Neh. 8:8, footnote in NKJV — “expounded the meaning”). They made sure they understood exactly what they were talking about. They didn’t use vague, scholarly words no one could grasp, or avoid the harder words in the passage. They spoke so that what was written could be clearly comprehended. Is it any wonder when Paul reasoned of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” in Acts 24:25 that Felix “trembled”? He didn’t have to guess what Paul was talking about, or if that was “really what it meant.” He knew exactly what the word of God said! These teachers helped fill in difficult statements with other places in the word of God which would clarify the meaning, or that might add in more details than could be found right in front of them. They wanted to be sure the people clearly understood the details of what the law of God set forth.

Then they “caused them to understand the reading” (Neh. 8:8). They made application of what had been read, or as Nathan said to David, “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7). Many times people try to apply God’s word to everyone else, but not to themselves. Sometimes we are afraid to be too plain for fear “they might turn against us.” But what if they never “understand” that it meant *them* — that *they* had to make changes, repent, correct, or adjust? What have we accomplished? Many of Jesus’ parables were so pointed the Jews clearly understood he spoke concerning them! These teachers spoke so the people “understood” the point of the passage and how it applied to them! Many times people may grasp a point and fail to understand it was aimed at them — “That was a great lesson if *they* had been here to hear it.” These teachers made them to understand what pertained to them and what they had to do about it to be pleasing to God.

And once comprehended, the people “wept” (Neh. 8:9). But while they may have wept over their shortcomings and sins, it was not a day of grief, but a day of rejoicing! They had learned God’s ways and could now walk in them; and in doing so, be in fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-7). Like the eunuch, it was a day of “rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). They could be free of their sins! They could indeed be the people of God!

And if they were God’s people doing God’s will, they could be blessed of God!

If all of us as teachers are faithful in fulfilling our tasks, others will be better prepared to do theirs! An excellent lesson for us all!

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## The Local Congregation — Its Assemblies

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The fact that local congregations had assemblies is substantiated by command, approved apostolic example, and necessary inference (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25; Jas. 2:2). And Paul commands us to observe an approved apostolic example (Phil. 4:9). Congregational autonomy is another subject, so we will confine our study at this time to the assemblies of the church.

In the first century, congregations were not only established for the benefit of the local saints, but these assemblies served as a haven for worship and fellowship to traveling saints. It was the practice of saints to seek out and find other disciples in a given geographical area. Paul and his companions found disciples (Acts 21:4), the same way they found a ship on which to travel — they looked (v. 2).

In their travels, some members of the church can find everything except other disciples and an assembly of the church. They can find (and even make reservations for) motels, camping areas, sports stadiums, antique shows, hunting and fishing sites, golf courses, and a host of other things. But they come home and say, “We couldn’t find the church building.” They wait until Sunday morning to start looking, then depend on the Yellow Pages or some non-member to direct them to the meeting place. One family told me (I met them at a funeral home) that the church had changed its meeting place and they couldn’t find the new one. They had only been back in town for fourteen years, and the new church building was in plain sight of the main U.S. highway going through town. A lot of times, these wandering members only want to get to the assembly in time to “get the Lord’s supper,” and they’ll go late or leave early in order to make that sacrifice.

Another ploy used by some brethren is to create a *pro tem* congregation in their area of visitation. That abbrevia-

tion for a Latin term means “for the time being.” Labor unions and other organizations use this method in order to facilitate a public function of some sort, then revert to the usual procedure.

The Lord set a day of assembly for certain acts or expressions of worship and service, but he did not set a time. He just said “on the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Unlike the assemblies/feasts of the Jews which were limited to one time zone and an economy which was common to all, the Lord knew that the church would be scattered throughout the world. The great commission itself would demand such (Mark 16:15; Acts 8:4; 11:19).

Matters of judgment as to time and place of local assemblies are to be decided by the local congregation. But when we make a “vow” (promise) before ourselves, each other, the community, and before God that we are going to do a thing, we need to remember the words of Solomon and the example of Ananias. Vows were not always required under the law of Moses, but once made, God expects us to keep them, if humanly possible (Eccl. 5:4-6). Ananias and Sapphira were not required to sell their possession, nor were they required to give any portion of the sale to the apostles. But once they professed to do a thing, the Lord held them to it (Acts 5:1-11).

We need to remember that any arrangements made as to place and time of assembly are made by imperfect human beings, and subject to change. Also, such assemblies are subject to weather, traffic, and other factors beyond our control. But when we deliberately absent ourselves from an established assembly and willfully (Heb. 10:25, 26) employ means to circumvent our duty to God and to other saints, we need to make certain we are not using the same excuse

others have used when they say, "It is Corban" (Mark 7:11). Some members will miss their own Bible study to attend a gospel meeting in the area (not because they couldn't attend both on different nights), but in order to "kill two birds with one stone." We visit the meeting, but still only have to give one night to the Lord that week. Let us make certain that one of the two birds we kill isn't ourselves.

Congregations are generally established by sacrifice and inconvenience on someone's part. Even larger, more affluent congregations have had humble beginnings, or drew their membership from small or rural congregations in other counties or states. These small, struggling congregations really appreciate visitors from other congregations, whether they come on vacation, for a family reunion, work-related trips, or if they just make a special trip to encourage the saints in some remote area. But it can be a selfish attitude to forsake our home congregation, fail to encourage a congregation near where we sojourn, then "take the Lord's supper" by ourselves or invent a *pro tem* congregation for a day or a week in order to pursue some personal pleasure. If all (or even a good number) had this attitude, there would be no congregations established, and those which are could not depend on moral or financial support from their own members or from visitors.

Now, I want you to do something for me. Here is a partial list (of my own personal knowledge) of reasons (?) why some members leave the home congregation, but don't attend anywhere else.

Some 55 years ago, I knew brethren (including a preacher), who went into the Canadian woods to hunt moose, but "they took the Lord's supper with them." Others may or may not assemble with a local congregation, and may or

may not "take the Lord's supper," but they travel to camp, take a cruise (by plane, bus, train, or ship), to hunt, fish, play golf, or attend some other form of sports or recreation, attend family reunions, birthday parties, or country/rock music festivals in Nashville, Branson, or elsewhere, and you could probably add to this list of various activities. Again, we are not talking about illness, caring for the sick and afflicted, work-related duties which help to support our household, natural or man-made disasters which may hinder us from assembling with the saints (and the Lord, Matt. 18:20) either at home or on a journey.

Now, what I want you to do (before you smite me "with the tongue" or typewriter), is to look over this list of activities in the preceding paragraph and tell me which of them is more (or less) important than the others. Because that's exactly what I'm going to insist that you do if you think that your particular activity is more important or justified in your sight, than the others are to those who do "such like."

If we are going to defend the principle of the local congregation and its autonomy before the denominational community or digressive brethren who would violate those principles, then we need to practice what we preach. Or look at Ezekiel 33:30-33 and see if the prophet was talking about us 2500 years before we were born. May God help us to emulate the attitude of the people in the days of Ezra (10:3, 4) and Nehemiah (13:3).

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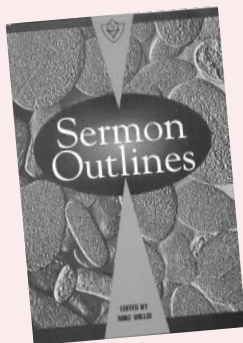
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## Catholicism Negates Jesus' Death, New Birth

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**Paul says that both classes of men, all men, must call on the name of the Lord, confessing that Jesus is Lord, if they would be saved (Rom. 10:9-13). The language of Romans 10 will not allow one to say that unbelieving Jews can be saved in their unbelief.**

**F**rom an article by Alan Cooperman in the *Washington Post*, and published in the *Houston Chronicle*, (8/18/02, 4A), it appears that “a committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has negated the death of Christ and invalidated his declaration, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:3-7).

Campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity “are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church,” a committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has declared.

Summing up a series of Vatican pronouncements since 1965 that has reversed the church’s historical approach to Judaism, the bishops said last week that the Old Testament covenant between the Jews and God is valid and that Jews do not need to convert to Christianity to be saved. While the Roman Catholic Church “must bear witness in the world to the Good News of Christ . . . this evangelizing task no longer includes the wish to absorb the Jewish faith into Christianity and so end the distinctive witness of Jews to God in human history,” they said.

. . . Eugene Fisher, director of Catholic-Jewish relations for the bishops’ conference, said the document contains ‘no new doctrine’ but ‘distills a lot of things that have been said and steps that have been taken’ since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Fisher noted, for example, that in the 1970s, the church changed its official prayer for the Jewish people, which used

to call for their conversion. Now the prayer, recited on Good Friday, asks God to help Jews intensify their faith in their covenant, he said.

While the Southern Baptist Convention and other evangelical groups run campaigns to convert Jews, the Catholic church gradually has abandoned such efforts. “If an individual Jew wants to convert to Catholicism, that can still happen,” said Monsignor Francis Maniscalco, spokesman for the bishops’ conference. “But the point is that proselytizing campaigns are not compatible with the respect with which we hold Judaism.”

The document makes clear that this attitude is unique. “Though the Catholic Church respects all religious traditions . . . and though we believe God’s infinite grace is surely available to believers of other faiths, it is only about Israel’s covenant that the Church can speak with the certainty of biblical witness,” it says. Although he played no role in drafting the document, Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, hailed it as “ground-breaking.” Some Catholic leaders have renounced proselytizing



among Jews in the past, but “this is the first time the Catholic leaders of a whole country have stated it officially,” he said.

### **Old Testament Not Nailed to the Cross?**

The law of commandments, contained in ordinances, has not been “nailed to the cross *if those bishops are correct*; but, they are not, and it has been (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). Though the Hebrew writer argues that God has taken away the first covenant that he may establish the second, this committee of Catholic bishops says “that the Old Testament covenant between the Jews and God is valid.” Do these bishops read the book of Hebrews?

Consider the awful implications of Hebrews 9:8 (“that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was still standing”) if the Old Testament covenant is still “valid.” (1) If the Old Testament is still “valid,” Christ cannot be our High Priest, since there is no place for one to be a priest from the tribe of Judah under the law of Moses (Heb. 7:11-14; Heb. 8:4). (2) If that is so, Christ is not our High Priest and we have no offering for our sins (Heb. 10). (3) Christ has not yet entered into heaven itself to “appear in the presence of God for us.” We are yet in our sins! (4) Paul uses the marriage relationship to establish that we are not under the law of Moses and that we may, therefore, be married to Christ (Rom. 7:1-6). Otherwise, we would be spiritual adulterers!

Despite the fact that these bishops say “the Old Testament covenant between the Jews and God is valid,” in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul says it “is done away” and “is abolished” (vv. 11, 13). Those Catholic bishops who contend to the contrary are “blinded” and are unwittingly forbidding men to receive “liberty” through the Spirit (vv. 14, 17; cf. Gal. 3:1-5).

### **If Jews Are Saved Apart From the Gospel**

If it is true “*that Jews do not need to convert to Christianity to be saved*,” as per the report above, then a number of things must follow.

**1. The “new birth” is null and void, at least as far as the Jews are concerned.** Remember, though, that it was to Nicodemus, a “ruler of the Jews,” to whom Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:1-7). Why did the Savior say that to Nicodemus? Since it is now claimed “that the (Catholic) Church can speak with the certainty of biblical witness” that Nicodemus need not be born again, why did Jesus say that he “*must be born again*”?

**2. The gospel is not now, and never has been, “the power of God unto salvation . . . to the Jew first and also to the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16).** Jesus said that “repentance and remission of sins” was to be preached “in (his) name, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Why, though, begin at Jerusalem, if the Jews have no need for “repentance and remission of sins” in the name of Christ?

If the Jews are saved through faithfulness to “Israel’s covenant” and not by the gospel, as Catholicism now claims, (1) why did John the Baptist tell them that their fleshly ties to Abraham were no guarantee of divine deliverance (Matt. 3:7-12)? (2) Why did Jesus tell them, “your house is left unto desolate” (Matt. 23:38)? Further, (3) if the Jews may be saved by the Old Testament, why did Jesus say, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43; cf. Heb. 12:28 and 1 Pet. 2:5-9 which shows the threat was fulfilled)? Has that verdict been repealed? Does modern Judaism possess the “kingdom of God”? The Holy Spirit says it does not (Col. 1:13; Heb. 1:8; Heb. 12:28)!

Specifically and directly including and indicting the Jews, Paul said

that “the preaching of the cross is to them that *perish* foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:18-23). If he is correct, the Jews today, who still consider the gospel “foolishness” are those who “perish” in contrast with those who believe it and “are saved.” Is it possible that a committee, a conference of men, can simply wipe Paul’s words out of existence and cancel their meaning? No (Matt. 24:35; Luke 10:16; 1 Cor. 4:6; 14:37; 15:11)! (4) Paul taught that the gospel he preached was “the word of . . . salvation” prophesied by the prophets (Acts 13:26). He also taught that it was only through the gospel they could have “the forgiveness of sins” and be “justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39). When the Jewish audience rejected the gospel and clung to “Israel’s covenant,” Paul said they had “judged (themselves) unworthy of everlasting life” (Acts 13:46). How could that be true if the Jews are saved without obedience to the gospel and by cleaving and clinging to “Israel’s covenant”?

**3. Jesus erred when he said to the Jews that their unbelief would condemn them.** If it is true that Jews may be saved without faith in Jesus as the Son of God, how do we explain the following texts, spoken to Jews, by the Lord himself? “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but *he that believeth not is condemned* already, *because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God* (John 3:18). “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for *if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Did Jesus err when he made those statement to the Jews? If not, this segment of Catholicism is wrong when it declares that the Jews may be saved without faith in Christ.

Jesus said that those who, like the Jews, do not believe in him, do not

believe in the Father, nor do they believe in Moses or his testimony. “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me” (John 5:46). If Jews today reject Jesus, they also reject Moses, “*for he wrote of me,*” Jesus said. So, though Catholicism claims that the Jews are saved if they abide in the Old Testament, Jesus denies it. Again, “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45). Where was that written? It was “written in the prophets,” that is, in the Old Testament. So, that covenant says that those who hear and learn from the Father will believe in Jesus. Thus, the Old Testament prophets did *not* say that Jews were to be excused from the New Covenant of Christ (cf. Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9). Jesus says that if one has “learned of” (or from) the Father, he will come “unto me.” Thus, Jews who reject Jesus have not “learned of the Father.” Neither are they truly abiding in “Israel’s covenant,” for if they were, they would believe in Jesus as the Son of God (John 5:46; 6:45). (Peter, who was allegedly Catholicism’s first Pope, spoke to the same effect and appealed to the testimony of Moses to prove that Jesus is Lord — Acts 3:22, 23; cf. 2:36; 3:13-15, 24-26).

The apostle John testifies to the same point. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? . . . *Who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:* but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 John 2:23). “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). Jews who do not believe in Christ have neither the Father, nor the Son, so in what way can it be said that they are saved apart from Christ?

According to the Holy Spirit, *the “liar”* is “he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ.” However, a Catholic committee of U.S. bishops says those liars, if they be unbelieving Jews, may be saved! (We shall not bother to mention that “all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” [Rev. 21:8].)

Note what the Holy Spirit said is done to God by those who, like the Jews, refuse to believe “on the Son of God.” “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son” (1 John 5:10). The unbelieving Jew makes God a liar “because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” Is it possible that such a man can be saved if he remains in that state of unbelief? Catholicism, it appears, would say, “yes.”

Did the Lord and the apostles tell the truth? If so, the Jews do not know God since they have spurned the Savior. This means that Catholicism is in error when it claims to the

contrary. If their committee of bishops is not teaching falsely, is the Bible wrong? It is one or the other. Both cannot be right. Either the doctrine of the Catholic Affairs Committee is wrong, or the Bible is wrong. What say ye?

**4. God’s grace is nullified and Jesus died in vain.** At least, that is what Paul argued. “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly” (Gal. 2:21). If unbelieving Jews are saved by the works of the law (which Paul contended was an impossibility — Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:10, 11), why did Jesus “taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9)? How could he be the propitiation for our sins, “and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,” if the Jews are saved by “intensify(ing) their covenant” (1 John 2:1, 2)?

The Hebrew writer has harsh words for those who have “insulted the Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29). When they say Jews may be saved by Moses’ law, the Catholic bishops endorse that which the Spirit of grace says has “nullified” the grace of God. Is not the sanctifying of unbelief an insult to the Spirit of grace?

Peter, whom the Catholic bishops claim as their first Pope, said that those who had been “redeemed” “with the precious blood of Christ” stood “in the *true grace* of God” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 5:12). That being true, in what kind of grace does one stand if he has “counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing” (Heb. 10:29)? Yet, that is where the unbelieving Jew stands to whom Catholicism promises grace and acceptance.

The Hebrew Christians were in danger of drawing back unto perdition (Heb. 10:32-39). They were seeking asylum under Moses and the blood of bulls and goats, which could never “take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). As such, they were warned of the eternal consequences which carries with it a penalty worse than physical death (Heb. 10:29). In strong and strict terms, they were told of the folly and futility of turning to “Israel’s covenant” and of forsaking the covenant of Christ (Heb. 2:1-4; 10:26-31). “See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth (Moses), much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him (God, through Jesus) who speaks from heaven” (Heb. 12:25; cf. 1:1, 2). In light of those sacred, solemn, searing words of the Spirit, how dare men declare them recipients of redemption who nullify the grace of God and make the cross of Christ of none effect?

**5. Paul was wrong when he said the purpose of the law was “to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24, 25).** No, Paul, according to Catholic scholars, that was not the purpose of the law. According to Catholicism, Paul did not know that the Jews, instead of coming to Christ in order to be justified by faith, must

retain and maintain the “intensity” of their devotion to their law and not to Christ.

The law was written “unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1:1). It was given to the Jews (Rom. 9:4, 5). The promises of which Paul spoke were made unto “Abraham and his seed” (Gal. 3:16). Hence, it cannot be denied that the Jews were included in the “us” of Galatians 3:24: “Wherefore the law was *our* schoolmaster to bring *us* unto Christ, that *we* might be justified by faith.” Now, since that system of faith has come, the Jews are “no longer under a schoolmaster;” that is, they are no more under the law, for “the law was (their) schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24, 25).

In view of the declaration of Galatians 3:24, 25, that the law was given to bring the Jews to Christ that they might be justified by faith, and that, therefore, the Jews are no longer under the law, will someone please explain how, in view of that, Catholicism can say, “with the certainty of biblical witness,” that grace is available to unbelieving Jews apart from faith in Christ? Denial will not make the text disappear or go away. Either Scripture is wrong, or Catholicism is wrong. Both positions cannot be true. Which is correct?

**6. Access into the grace of God is not by faith.** If the Jews (who yet “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,” declaring in their unbelief that he deserved the death he died) are saved, it follows that Paul was wrong when he declared that “we have *access by faith into this grace* wherein we stand” (Rom. 3:24; 5:1, 2). Without faith, one cannot have access or entrance “into this grace wherein we stand” and by which we are saved and justified (Rom. 3:24).

Galatians 2:16 through 3:29 is the declaration of independence from the curse of the law. It is the charter of spiritual liberty, freeing those who were bound under sentence of death to the works of the law. It is an emancipation proclamation granting full inheritance to the family of faith. Because “Israel’s covenant” is not of faith, it cannot liberate and emancipate, it cannot free and forgive its captives who wait on their spiritual death row. However, “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

Now, let us reverse that great text. What is true of the opposite of it? Let us see. “You are *not* sons of God for you have *not* believed in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were *not* baptized into Christ have *not* put on Christ. There are *both* Jew and Greek, there *are* slaves and free, there *are* males and females; for you are *not* one in Christ Jesus. And

if you are *not* Christ’s, then you are *not* Abraham’s seed, and *not* heirs according to the promise.”

See the condition of those who are not children of God by faith in Christ, those who have not been baptized into Christ? Now, it is to just such people, modern day unbelieving Jews, to whom Catholicism would grant the blessings and benefits of son-ship and inheritance. If they have those blessings (and I would to God that they did!), then one can make no sense of Galatians 2:16-3:29, particularly 3:26-29.

Observe that Abraham’s seed are those who are children of God “in (not out of) Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). This “squares” with Romans 2:28, 29, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” In view of those texts, are unbelieving Jews today “Abraham’s seed”? Are they Jews “whose praise is . . . from God”? No wonder that Jesus said to Nicodemus, a man who had the blood of Abraham pulsing, coursing and throbbing through his body, “Ye must be born again”!

**7. One may be saved who will not submit himself to the righteousness of God.** Since his prayer was that the Jews “might be saved,” it is evident that the apostle Paul thought and taught that unbelieving Jews were lost (Rom. 10:1-17). Paul argues that it is “the same” for both Jew and Gentile, for both have the same Lord (Rom. 10:12). Plainly, he says that both classes of men, all men, must call on the name of the Lord, confessing that Jesus is Lord, if they would be saved (Rom. 10:9-13). The language of Romans 10 will not allow one to say that unbelieving Jews can be saved in their unbelief. It will not permit one to be saved who does not believe “that God hath raised him (Christ) from the dead” (v. 9).

Yes, Paul allows, the Jews have a fervent “zeal of God,” but it is not according to knowledge, rather, it is in ignorance (cf. Acts 3:17; Rom. 10:3). The Jew is ignorant of God’s plan of making men righteous through Christ. Because of that, he has rejected Jesus and gone about to establish his own plan of righteousness, his own system of salvation, which cannot save him. No group of bishops, however gracious are their goals or noble are their intentions, can grant them the hope of eternal salvation apart from faith in Christ. At least, they cannot do so if Romans 10 is to be believed.

Because of their unbelief, the Jews were broken off. All who stand, stand by faith in Christ. Only if the Jew turns to faith in Christ can he expect to be saved. That is what the Spirit said in Romans 11:20-23. Thus, they cannot be saved who “have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

## Jesus: Son of God — Fact or Fable?

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No question is more important than the one that titles this article. If Jesus is in *fact* the Son of God, whatever he teaches and requires must be given the undivided attention of men. If Jesus is nothing more than a fanciful story or *fable*, it matters not what we do or do not do with reference to him.

The apostle Peter was one of the men whose testimony on this question was preserved in the New Testament, a revelation given by none less than the Holy Spirit himself. Peter said “his divine power” gave knowledge of these critical issues (2 Pet. 1:3). Paul agrees, affirming “all scripture

is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul also affirms that the “mystery” which was unknown before, has now been revealed “by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:3-5). Paul then says he recorded the revelation by the Spirit in words which men can understand when they are read. One needs to remember that Peter and Paul gave their lives in the service of Christ. They must have had confidence in the validity of the Spirit’s revelation.

This brings us to the point of this brief article. The apostle Peter was certainly aware of the possibilities concerning the truth about Jesus. He addressed those possibilities in the following passage:

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**8. One may have eternal life outside of Christ.** “And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and *this life is in his Son*” (1 John 5:11). Paul spoke of “the promise of life which is *in* (not out of) Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:1). May one have eternal life apart from Christ? Peter, who is supposed to have been the first Pope of the Catholic Church, said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Let it be noted that Peter said those words to his brethren in the flesh, the Jews. Late in the afternoon on the day before, he had told the Jews to “repent . . . and be converted that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). They had refused to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ and had crucified him. Peter told them there was no other refuge, no other way of redemption, no other plan of peace and pardon. They had to believe and obey the Lord Jesus, or else they would be “destroyed” (Acts 2:36-38; 3:13-19, 23; 4:12).

Since the Catholic Church of today no longer prays for the Jews “conversion,” they are refusing to pray for that which their alleged first Pope appealed (Acts 3:19). Now, according to the article above, instead of issuing a “call for their conversion . . . the prayer recited on Good Friday, asks God to help Jews intensify their faith in their covenant.” In

other words they are not only denying Peter’s appeal for their conversion, but they are asking God to harden the Jews in their unbelief toward his only begotten Son!

### Conclusion

If the news report is in error, and if the Catholic Church has been misrepresented, I shall be happy to know it so that I may make correction. Or, if the bishops have overstepped their authority, should we not expect to see a clear disclaimer and denunciation of their pronouncement? Too, should we not expect to hear that the Jews must indeed be converted to Christ and that if they fail to believe on the Son of God, they “shall die in (their) sins” (John 3:18, 36; 8:24; 14:6)? If the news account is misleading, will a Catholic authority, above that of the U.S. Conference of Bishops, come out and frankly declare to the Jews exactly what the Savior said to them, “that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. *He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father* who sent Him” (John 5:23)?

*(Addendum: After finishing the article above, I saw a report where another group of religious scholars, some of whom evidently are Protestants, have said much the same as Catholicism has said; namely, that “Jews can be saved without coming to faith in Jesus Christ” [San Antonio Express-News, 9/7/02, 7B]. Again, if that be so, let liberal 4626 Osage, Baytown, Texas 77521*

For we have not followed cunningly devised *fables*, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

Do you see Peter's recognition of our question in that passage? He said this is not a *fable*! They were *eyewitnesses* of his majesty, the honor and glory bestowed on him by the Father himself. They had heard the voice of God "in the holy mount," the mount of Transfiguration. Note the divine record:

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: *and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him* (Matt. 17:1-5).

A similar affirmation, that Jesus was God's Son, had been made when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17). In this latter passage God also affirmed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

In both of these passages, God affirmed the *fact* that Jesus was his Son! Thus, this idea was not a "cunningly devised *fable*." Accordingly, Jesus should be regarded as *divine*, with proper obedience, honor, and respect.

#### Additional Evidence

Next, the apostle Peter introduces further proof of the *fact* of the deity of Christ: *prophecy*! Peter wrote: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19). There were prophecies before that Jesus was God, or God's Son.

Isaiah (750-721 B.C.) wrote of the coming birth of Jesus: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a *son*, and shall call his name *Immanuel*" (Isa. 7:14). Matthew, in his account of the birth of Jesus, cited this Isaiah passage and applied it to Christ (Matt. 1:23). Matthew affirmed the *fact* that Jesus was God!

Isaiah also wrote of the *fact* of Jesus' deity: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a *son* is given: and the government

shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The mighty God*, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). The message of *prophecy* spoken hundreds of years before, to which Peter referred, affirmed the *fact* that Jesus was God's Son. These prophecies simply strengthened the truth that the apostles had seen and heard as eyewitnesses.

One other thought: Peter next notes that prophets like Isaiah were not just writing fanciful stories or myths. Peter said, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). In this way, God preserved the accuracy of the writings of the prophets. Those prophets were *inspired*; they communicated the exact message God wanted them to give. Therefore, their writings confirmed the same *fact* that Jesus was God's Son, as Peter and others had heard the heavenly voice (God) affirm about him.

No, Jesus was not a product of *fable*. He was, and is, in *fact* the Christ, the Son of the living God. Thus, what he says and commands is vital to us. We *simply must* obey him since he saves only those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). When he tells us to believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Matt. 10:32-33), and be baptized (Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19), *we must respond in obedience*! After all, Jesus is the Son of God! He is not a *fable* that we can ignore.

Have you obeyed God's Son?

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## The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict

by Josh McDowell

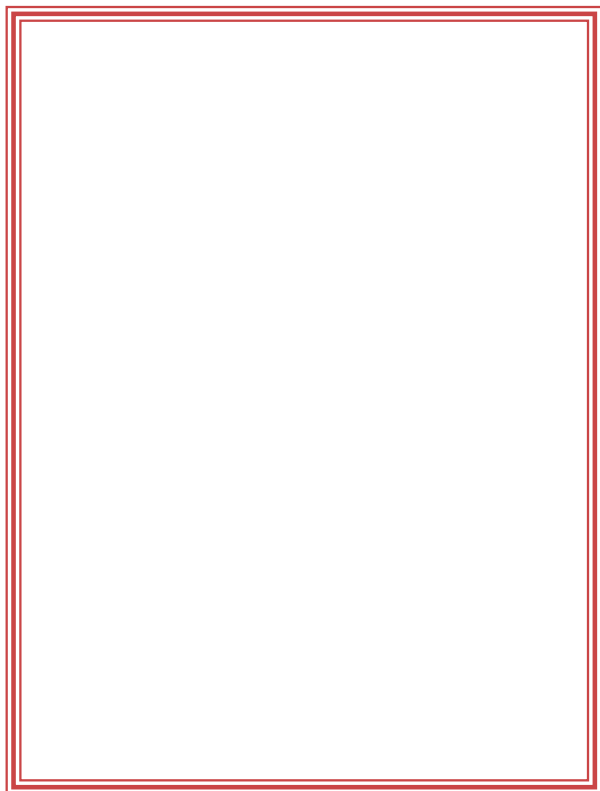
Combines the author's two original best-selling volumes into one, maintaining their classic defense of the faith, yet answering new questions posed by today's culture. #12198.

## A Spiritual Boost

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Every Christian sometimes finds himself in need of a boost of his spiritual battery, and the same is also true of preachers. While some act as if it is strange that any preacher might sometimes find himself weak and longing for more spiritual might, most children of the Lord understand that preachers are cut from the same cloth as other Christians. All of us must remember to not grow weary in doing good, knowing that we shall reap in due season if we do not lose heart (Gal. 6:9).

An author unknown to this writer wrote the following about the diverse needs, requirements, and expectations that many demand of preachers.



### What a Preacher Needs

The strength of an ox,

The daring of a lion,  
The harmlessness of a dove,  
The gentleness of a sheep,  
The vision of an eagle,  
The perspective of a giraffe,  
The endurance of a camel,  
The stomach of a horse,  
The faithfulness of a prophet,  
The fervency of an evangelist,  
The tenacity of a bulldog,  
The wisdom of an owl,  
The industry of a beaver,  
The versatility of a chameleon,  
The hide of a rhinoceros,  
The disposition of an angel,  
The bounce of a kangaroo,  
The loyalty of an apostle,  
The tenderness of a shepherd,  
The devotion of a mother,  
And then, he would not please everyone.

Such a spiritual need evidently existed in the life of young Timothy. He had the best spiritual training in childhood and youth that any Jew of that time could have desired, though his own father probably did not contribute to it. “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim. 1:5). “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

Why then would Timothy need special encouragement in his work as an evangelist? Remember that he was in Ephesus to help the church with the problems associated with false teachers and with helping the congregation in learning about elders and selecting them (1 Tim. 1:3; 3:1). It is possible that Timothy was the most mature Christian in the church, with few others capable of building him up as he could them. Even the more mature disciples sometimes need encouragement and strength, which they can gain from others.

## Honey Drippin' From a Vinegar Jug

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There are people in the secular world who appear to be very likeable, sweet, cuddly, and positive as long as you agree with them on every subject, and as long as you let them have their way in everything. But, boy, oh boy, if you clash with them they are like chameleons that have lost their ability to “blend with the background”! Have you ever met people like this?

The world does not hold a monopoly on such people. There are individuals like this in the Lord’s body. They profess belief in “positive Christianity,” but they can be very negative when their errors are exposed, or when they are forced to take a stand on an issue that they consider “petty and divisive.”

We should avoid the wrong kind of negativism. We shouldn’t have a mind set that condemns everything, and looks for the proverbial Communist behind every bush! Neither should we tolerate everything, and accept every bird like innovation that nests in every bush!

When brothers and sisters in Christ act without divine authority (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9-11), worship with the instrument of music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); advocate placing women in “leadership roles” over men (1 Tim. 2:11-12); fail to speak out against unholy marital unions (Mark 6:18; Matt. 19:9); teach error about the creation of God (Gen. 1; Exod. 20:11); advocate the use of “special singing” (solos, choirs, quartets, etc.) in the assembly

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This must have been Paul’s motivation in writing as he did in certain instances in the first letter to Timothy. It is clear that the bolstering of the young preacher’s spirit was the design of some of the older apostle’s words.

**1. He reminded Timothy of his gift.** “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Tim. 4:14). From this verse and from 2 Timothy 1:6 we learn that Timothy had some kind of gift. It is this writer’s conclusion that it was a miraculous gift, because it came in connection with a certain revelation through (*dia*) the imposition of Paul’s hands and in association with (*meta*) the laying on of the hands of elders. The wording of this admonition might imply that Timothy was growing disheartened in his work. Such a divine reminder might have been just what he needed.

**2. He also challenged him to show courage by a reminder of his good confession of the Lord unto eternal life, as well as the Lord’s confession.** “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who

quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:12-14). Timothy hereby could realize that he was in the company of Christ in his confession, in which he must continue to persevere.

**3. He exhorted Timothy to “guard the deposit” of the gospel message given to him.** “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20). Both letters to Timothy deal with the error being advocated and its proponents. Timothy had a difficult task on his hands, but he must preserve the gospel message pure from all contamination. Such was his trust. He was doing this work of guarding the gospel for God. This meant that he would have to oppose all efforts of the errorists. It also meant that he might occasionally have to identify some of error’s advocates by name, as did Paul (1 Tim. 1:20). Playing fast and loose with names is not what Paul did (he rarely named people), but in a few instances he thought the peril sufficient to name the teachers. One who desires to follow

(Col. 3:16); teach that Jesus divested himself of his deity during the incarnation (John 2:25; 5:18; 8:58); promote a recreational, entertainment, and social agenda for local congregations as a part of their work (1 Tim. 3:15); teach that Paul's instructions in Romans 14 are applicable to moral and doctrinal issues (Rom. 14:1, 5, 21), and state that a person who teaches what is false and damnable is not a false teacher (2 Pet. 2:1-3) they must be opposed without fear, favor, or compromise! Loyalty to God always supersedes allegiance to family and friends.

The advocates of the "positive movement" will generally agree (at least under pressure) with what has been said above, but they often denounce the men who openly denounce those things! What an enigma. If you believe

a Christian shouldn't be negative when he opposes the proponents of error, how can you consistently oppose him for being "negative?"

Have you ever noticed that many of those who adhere to the "positive Christianity" movement, appear to be as "cuddly as Teddy bears and as sweet as honey" until there is a spiritual clash, then they grow the fangs of a giant king cobra dripping with the venom of a hundred rattlesnakes? Even though their words and demeanor often appear to be honey soaked on the outside, that honey is drippin' from a ~~vinegar jug on the inside!~~  
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## "Heaven" continued from front page

**"Lord" will enter heaven.** Again, Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (v. 21). Not only is it clear that some will be excluded from heaven, it is just as clear that many of those who will be excluded are people who claim Christ as their Lord. Sadly, many religious people have been taught that all they need to do is just believe in Jesus, or "accept Jesus into your heart" in order to be saved. But the Bible says that salvation is "not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). To those who plan to enter heaven simply on the basis that they claim Christ as their Lord he would say, "But why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

**3. Those who do the will of the Father will enter heaven.** Christ assures us that the one who will enter into heaven is "he who does the will of my Father in heaven" (v. 21). Many scoff at the idea that the salvation offered by Christ is conditional in nature. Yet Christ is the one who placed the conditions upon it. He is the one who said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Those who fail to obey the gospel will not enter heaven (2 Thess. 1:6-8).

**4. Many will claim to have glorified the name of Christ on the day of judgment.** Jesus says, "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?'" (v. 22). The Bible teaches that in the end there will come a day when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what

he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Evidently, many will call to mind the great and noble things they have done to glorify Christ on that day as a testimony of their worthiness to enter heaven. But they will not find the Lord as impressed with their marvelous works as they had hoped. God is not interested in whether or not we have done something spectacular and glorious. He is interested in whether or not we have done his will (1 Sam. 15:22).

**5. Christ will tell those who claim to have glorified his name to depart.** Of those who will claim in the day of judgment to have done fantastic deeds in the name of Christ he says, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (v. 23). Notice that Christ does not turn to these people and say, "You liars! You never did these fantastic works!" The fact is that people may do many things that they sincerely believe will glorify the Lord, and yet be told in the end to depart, having their entrance into heaven denied. The only true way to bring glory to Christ is to recognize that he has all authority (Matt. 28:18), and to act with his authority and approval in all that we do (Col. 3:17). Anything we might do that does not carry the approval of the word of Christ is "lawlessness," regardless of how noble it may seem to us (2 John 9).

## Conclusion

Heaven is described as a truly wonderful place where "there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain" (Rev. 21:4). But we must face up to the fact that not everyone will enter heaven. "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

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## “Hell” continued from page 2

to assure ourselves that there is no hell” (Gerstner, *Repent or Perish* 15).

The Bible doctrine of hell has been under increasing attack in recent years. A Gallup poll conducted through ten European countries showed the

Proportion in percentages of believers in the hereafter compared with the proportion of believers in Hell among ten European countries: 45.6% believe in “Life after death”; 52.7% believe in “Heaven”; 29.3% believe in “Hell.” Though belief in hell is always less frequent than belief in the hereafter, the survey shows that there are more people who profess to believe in heaven than there are who believe in the hereafter. (There is a) lower proportion of believers in hell compared to those who believe in heaven (Pierre Deloos, “Who Believes in the Hereafter?”, *Death and Presence* 34).

American statistics are not as bad as the European numbers, but the issue of the nature of eternal punishment is moving to the front burner because of recent assaults against the doctrine. A survey of periodical literature at a good religious library will confirm that this is so. The threat is so great to Evangelicals that the Evangelical Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth Among Evangelicals (ACUTE) prepared a report on the *The Nature of Hell* (2000) to address the subject.

Robert A. Morey affirms that there is a cycle in man’s belief after hell. The cycle begins with a long period during which it is acknowledged that the Scriptures clearly teach eternal punishment. This is then followed by the following successive stages:

- *Indifference.* The teaching on hell is ignored and often downplayed while the positive side of God’s love is over-emphasized.
- *Ignorance.* Because God’s teaching on hell is ignored, men become ignorant of why they should believe what they do about hell.
- *Doubt.* Doubts begin to creep into people’s mind. People begin to speak of the doctrine of hell as being “unkind,” “unloving,” and “negative.”
- *Denial.* Cults begin to present universalism or annihilation as the alternative to the biblical doctrine of hell. Because people have not been taught, these doctrines spread.
- *Irritation.* Those who know the Bible doctrine are irritated by the spread of the doctrine, but they “don’t have time to deal with this issue right now.”
- *Affirmation.* As the issue heats up, the Bible doctrine is re-affirmed.
- *Acknowledgment.* After the Bible doctrine is re-affirmed, another lengthy period of the acknowledgment of the doctrine follows (see *Death and the Afterlife, “Introduction”*).

At the outset of this series one may notice the change in Evangelical thought about hell. Clearly, they are in the stages when men have been indifferent toward the doctrine of hell, an ignorance has blossomed, doubt has set in, and the cults’ doctrine of annihilation is winning support among Evangelicals. Gerstner observed that the denial of hell was formerly a litmus test of a cult such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormonism, Seventh-day Adventists, etc. until recently (*Repent or Perish* 30). However, the views of hell propagated by these cults are now being espoused by mainstream Evangelicals. Already some Evangelicals are now in the stage of reaffirming the doctrine of hell, just as brethren are beginning to publish materials that question the doctrine.

### Attacks on the Bible Doctrine of Hell

Through the years, there have been a variety of attacks on hell. Here are some of them:

**1. Materialism.** The doctrine of materialism denies that man has an eternal soul and, with this doctrine, that there is no eternal punishment for man. The philosophical doctrine of materialism is defined as “the doctrine that matter is the only reality and that everything in the world, including thought, will, and feeling, can be explained only in terms of matter.” Materialism is the underlying doctrine for atheism or humanism.

**2. Universalism.** The doctrine of universalism believes in the ultimate salvation of every individual, including the Devil himself. The doctrine is usually defended on the grounds of the universal love of God. It is based on the rather emotional argument, “Could a God of love punish anyone eternally?”

**3. Restorationism.** This is a name given to the doctrine that ultimately all rational beings will be restored to the fellowship of God. It is sometimes defended on the misinterpretation of Acts 3:21 (“until the times of restitution of all things”). There are very few people who hold to this doctrine.

**4. Annihilation.** The doctrine of annihilation teaches that God will annihilate the wicked, not eternally punish them. This is the doctrine taught by Jehovah’s Witnesses who believe that when the wicked die, they cease to exist. At the resurrection, only the righteous will be raised to eternal life. Anthony Hoekema described two forms of annihilationism as follows:

The other main form which the denial of eternal punishment has assumed is found in the doctrine of annihilationism. This doctrine may take either of two forms. According to one form, man was created immortal, but those who continue in sin are deprived of immortality and are simply annihilated — that is reduced to nonexistence. According to the other form, also known as “conditional immortality,”

man was created mortal. Believers receive immortality as a gift of grace, and therefore continue to exist in a state of blessedness after death. Unbelievers, however, do not receive this gift and hence remain mortal; therefore at death they are annihilated. Both forms of annihilationism teach the annihilation of the wicked, and therefore deny the doctrine of eternal punishment (*The Bible and the Future* 266).

The first form of annihilationism is held by the Jehovah's Witnesses and the second form by the Seventh Day Adventists. Because of its rise to prominence among Evangelicals in recent years, this second form will be treated more extensively.

**5. Conditional immortality.** As mentioned above, this is but a form of annihilationism. According to this doctrine, at death both soul and body die. There is no consciously existing soul that survives the death of the body. In contrast to the view of the Jehovah's Witnesses who believe that only the righteous will be raised from the dead, the conditional immortality advocates believe that both the righteous and the wicked will be raised from the dead. During the time between death and the resurrection, the soul is "asleep," that is, the soul does not have separate, conscious existence in contrast to the rotting and decaying body. Both the righteous and the wicked will be raised from the dead, but an immortal body is only given to the righteous. After the resurrection, the wicked will be punished for a time commensurate with each person's wickedness before being completely annihilated. This is the position of the Seventh Day Adventists. Hoekema describes their position as follows:

Seventh-day Adventists teach that, after Satan's final assault on the "camp of the saints," fire will come down from heaven and will annihilate Satan, his evil angels, and all the wicked. Before this happens, however, those to be annihilated will be subjected to gradations of suffering, depending on the guilt of the persons or demons involved; Satan himself will suffer the longest and will therefore be the last to perish in the flames. At the end of this period of suffering, however, all those who have rebelled against God will be wiped out of existence (*The Four Major Cults* 360).

More relevant than the fact that the Seventh Day Adventists believe in conditional immortality with reference to the influence of this doctrine among Christians is the fact that this is the view advocated by Edward Fudge in his book *The Fire That Consumes*. The significance of brother Fudge's book may have escaped some of our brethren. *The Fire That Consumes* is the most extensive defense of the "conditional immortality" doctrine presently available. The book has been reviewed in many denominational publications and its conclusions accepted by such prominent Evangelicals as John Wenham, John R.W. Stott, and Clark H. Pinnock (see *Two Views of Hell* 12). F.F. Bruce wrote the Foreword to the book. The ACUTE report on *The Nature of Hell*

said, "In his 1974 study *The Goodness of God*, Wenham had offered careful arguments which gained a respectful hearing and prompted some lively responses. Not least, he inspired the American scholar Edward William Fudge to produce a full-length study of the biblical material which rapidly became the standard reference-work on evangelical conditionalism" (66-7). Fudge has participated in discussions with Evangelicals on the subject (see *Two Views of Hell*, a written debate between brother Fudge and Robert A. Peterson, professor of theology at Covenant Theological Seminary). In replying to Fudge, John Gerstner said, "If Edward Fudge's *The Fire That Consumes* (1982) was not the start of the current conservative attack on hell, it at least has a central role" (*Repent or Perish* 64).

After brother Fudge accepted the tenets of the unity-in-diversity movement in the 1970s, he has worked among our institutional brethren, holding membership in the Bering Drive church in Houston. Because of his departure from among us, his influence has been felt less than would otherwise have been the case had he stayed. The issue of annihilationism had little impact among brethren, at least so far as we knew. However, a few weeks ago I received a notice from Stanley Paher announcing the publication of a book by the late brother Homer Hailey which reaches the conclusion that the soul ceases to exist as it is destroyed in hell. With the advent of brother Hailey's new book, the danger of annihilationism, as advocated by Fudge, resurfaces.

In the present day circumstances of the influence of unity-in-diversity, the issue may lead to yet another step down the slippery slopes of liberalism. We have already read brother Ed Harrell's defense of Homer Hailey (as a prelude to his 17-article series that advocated unity-in-diversity) in which he affirmed that churches who decide to invite brother Hailey for meetings, even though he is teaching his erroneous views on divorce and remarriage, are guilty of no sin. We have been told by others that the teaching of a non-literal interpretation of Genesis 1 by Shane Scott and Hill Roberts should not interfere with the fellowship of the saints. Will the next step be as follows? "We cannot know for sure whether hell is eternal punishment or annihilation. Brethren have disagreed on this subject. Therefore, we must tolerate the teaching of different views of the subject among us without it affecting the fellowship of the saints." Probably so, for some of those who worked most closely with brother Hailey were aware of his material on the subject but did not draw a line of fellowship. I fear that the toleration of annihilationism — the Seventh Day Adventist doctrine of hell — will be but another step down the slippery slope of liberalism. And, of course, the one who is causing the problem will no doubt be judged by some to be, not the one who teaches annihilationism, but the one who warns that this is a departure from sound doctrine!

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# “Days Are Coming”

Olen Holderby

This expression is found twenty-two times in the Bible: Two times in the New Testament (Luke 23:29, Heb. 8:8), once in 1 Samuel (2:31), once in 2 Kings (20:17), once in Isaiah (39:6), and two times in Amos (8:11, 9:13). The other fifteen times are all found in the book of Jeremiah.

Fourteen of those times in Jeremiah, the expression is followed by “says the Lord.” In the fifteenth time the expression is preceded, in the context, by “saith the Lord” (51:47, 36).

One of the two times it is used in the New Testament (Heb. 8:8), it is a quote from Jeremiah 31:31. The other New Testament usage (Luke 23:29) is a statement made by Jesus in what appears to be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

What is the import of “says the Lord” in these references? “Surely,” we say, “it is to show the origin of the message.” No doubt, it does that! But, is that all? I think not! James tells us, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . . For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (4:14-15). So, no man can say that certain “days are coming” with absolute certainty and accuracy. God, and only God, can do that!

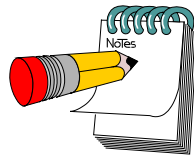
The expression, then, suggests at least three things: (1) The message originates with God, (2) The message is certain, and (3) God sees the end from the beginning — the foreknowledge of God! Therefore, God’s prophecies and promises are absolutely certain of fulfillment.

Now, consider, God has “appointed a day, in the which he shall judge the world” (Acts 17:31). God appointed this day! It is, therefore, absolutely certain! Peter tells us that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). How do we know that this shall be? God said so! Indeed, “The Day is Coming.”

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## Quips & Quotes



### Back To Basics

Johnie and John Isaac Edwards are publishing a 12-page monthly journal, which began in January, dedicated to teaching first principles called, Back to Basics. There is a real need for getting back to basic Bible teaching, as many have gotten away from first principle type teaching. There will be a small subscription fee of just \$1.00 per issue to cover cost of printing and mailing. Each issue will feature about ten articles by different men. Every other month, they plan to do a special issue. For example, February will be devoted to, “The Basics of Bible Baptism” and April’s theme will be, “Identifying The One True Church.” We are encouraging churches to order a bundle for the members. We recommend at least one copy

for each family. Send an e-mail to [BcktoBscs@aol.com](mailto:BcktoBscs@aol.com) or call (812) 883-4974 and tell them how many copies you want and where to send them.

## Preachers Needed

**Milton, Vermont:** Evangelist needed to work in the Northeast. Small congregation of 40-60 with its own building. Contact Phil Chatot (802-524-9480; [pchatot@us.ibm.com](mailto:pchatot@us.ibm.com)). \$2000 per month is available toward a man’s support; the rest will need to be raised by the person moving there. This is a stable congregation with a good age-group mix. For more information, you may contact the former preacher Tom Moody, who worked there for eleven years (5074 Porter Ct., Pegram, TN 37143). Milton is located in rural Vermont, an ideal place to rear one’s children.