

Back To Basics

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SPECIAL EXPANDED EDITION: ANSWERING RELIGIOUS ERROR

Johnie Edwards

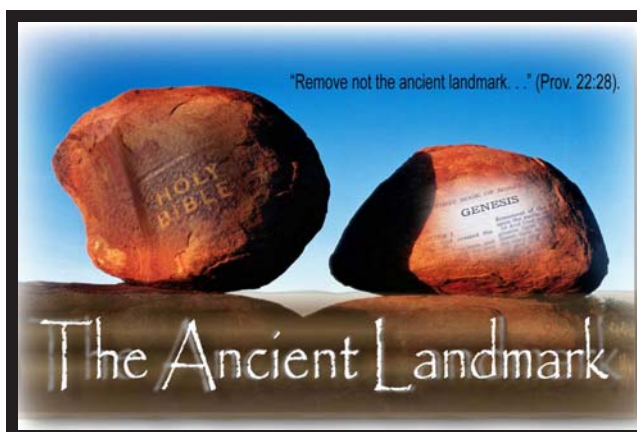
Religious error is nothing new. It raised its ugly head while Jesus and the apostles were on earth.

1) **JESUS ANSWERED ERROR.** When the Sadducees asked Jesus, "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her..." (Mt. 22:23-28), Jesus responded, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Mt. 22:29). The best defense against religious error is to equip ourselves with a knowledge of the Scriptures. Our Lord uttered, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). As Paul told young Timothy, truth must be studied and rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15). It is evident, from this episode in Matthew 22, that religious error exists because men do not know the Scriptures!

2) **THE APOSTLES ANSWERED ERROR.** The apostles, being Holy Spirit guided, were very capable of answering religious error and they did so. When Judaizers tried to bind law of Moses obligations on New Testament Christians, Paul answered their religious error immediately! A good example can be seen in Galatians 5 when the freedom of the

Galatian Christians was under attack. False teachers tried to bind fleshly circumcision on these Christians and Paul answered their error by showing the consequences of keeping the law. He said Christ would profit them nothing, they would be debtors to do the whole law, and they were fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4). The apostles did not tolerate false doctrine, "No, not for an hour" (Gal. 2:1-5).

3) **WE MUST ANSWER ERROR.** Just as our Lord and the apostles answered religious error, so must we! After learning the difference in truth and error, we must have the courage to answer it! Peter penned, "But 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). Religious error must be reprov'd. Writing the Ephesians, Paul said, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). May we never be too timid to answer religious error, that, as Paul said, "the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). Please take time to read and study these back to basic articles in this special issue.



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WARNING AGAINST ERROR

John Isaac Edwards

There is constant need for warning against error. Peter penned, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pet. 3:17).

1) **ERROR IS OF THE DEVIL.** Error was first introduced by Satan, in the garden of Eden, when the father of lies said, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4; Jn. 8:44). As God is “a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Dt. 32:4), Satan, “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), is a god of error and with iniquity, unjust and wrong is he! Those who propagate error are “the children of the devil” (Acts 13:10; 1 Jn. 3:8, 10).

2) **ERROR INVOKES DIVINE ANGER.** When Uzzah “put forth his hand to the ark of God,” which none were allowed to touch (Num. 4:15), “the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God” (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Throughout the pages and ages of sacred history, death has always been the companion of error.

3) **ERROR IS TO BE EXPOSED.** Ever since man has possessed the knowledge of good and evil, he has been inclined to try to cover error (Gen. 3:5, 10). There is no cloak of any human construction that can conceal error, “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lk. 12:2). As light expels darkness, truth exposes error (Jn. 3:20-21). Error, and those involved in it, have always been identified in a specific way. God, by His servant Jeremiah, identified the work of idolatry as “the work of errors” (Jer. 10:15; 51:18). Jesus said to the Sadducees, which denied the

resurrection, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mt. 22:23, 29). Paul labeled homosexuality as “error” (Rom. 1:27) and named Hymenaeus and Philetus as having erred concerning the truth (2 Tim. 2:16-18). Jude made mention of “the error of Balaam,” in Jude 11. Saints, of every generation, must “reprove” the “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11).

May our desire always be, “Teach me...and cause me to understand wherein I have erred” (Job 6:24).

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TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

John Isaac Edwards

The doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity (*Adamic Sin, Original Sin, Inherited Sin*) holds “that through the disobedience of Adam original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature and a hereditary disease, wherewith even infants in their mother’s womb are infected, and which produces in man all sorts of sin, being in him a root thereof, and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind” (*Belgic Confession, Article XV, Original Sin*).

1) **SIN DIVINELY DEFINED.** This religious error misses the divine definition of sin. Sin is divinely defined as:

Lust conceived. “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. 1:15). Infants in their mother’s womb, being without lust, are without sin!

Knowing to do good, and not doing it. “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17). Can you tell us what it is that infants in their mother’s womb have not done, that they know to do? Children, having “no knowledge between good and evil” (Dt. 1:39), have no sin.

Transgression of the law. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 Jn. 3:4). If *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law*, then infants in their mother’s womb infected with sin must have transgressed the law.

Now you need to tell us which law they have transgressed! If they have not transgressed the law, then they have not committed sin.

Unrighteousness. “All unrighteousness is sin...” (1 Jn. 5:17). Paul listed acts of unrighteousness in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Will you tell us what act of unrighteousness infants in their mother’s womb are guilty of? Is it fornication? How about idolatry? Are they guilty of stealing? What unrighteousness have they done?

Jesus said, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn. 8:34). Infants are not sinners, seeing they have committed no sin!

2) **AS EVE WAS BEGUAILED, SO OUR MINDS ARE CORRUPTED.** 2 Corinthians 11:3 - “But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” - shows that by whatever means Eve was enticed to sin, we are enticed to sin. By what means did the serpent beguile Eve? Genesis 3 shows Eve was deceived by “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16), when she “saw that the tree was good for good, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise...took of the fruit, thereof, and did eat” (Gen. 3:6). Corruption did not enter the world through the disobedience of Adam, but rather, as Peter said, “corruption...is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). As Eve, “...every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jas. 1:14-15).

3) **INFANTS ARE INNOCENT.** To see that infants are not infected with the hereditary disease of original sin, simply read Psalm 106:37-38. The Psalmist spoke of the sins of the fathers when they “sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.” Infants and children are innocent in God’s sight; not sin-infected!

4) **THE SCRIPTURES TEACH INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY.** Ezekiel 18, a burial ground for birth sin, affirms the doctrine of personal responsibility. Verses 1-20 affirm that neither iniquity nor righteousness is inherited, and a man’s fate is not determined by the goodness or wickedness of others. As the unjust son of verses 10-13 did not inherit the just nature of his father (verses 5-9), the sinful nature of the unjust man of verses 10-13 was not passed to his son (verses 14-17). Verse 20 contains the climactic conclusion: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

Other passages which affirm individual accountability:

Deuteronomy 24:16 “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”

Romans 2:5-6 God “will render to every man according to his deeds.”

Colossians 3:25 “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

In order for total hereditary depravity to be true, these passages would have to read:

“...*the children shall be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for Adam’s sin.*”

“...*who will render to every man according to Adam’s deeds.*”

“...*shall receive for the wrong which Adam hath done...*”

5) **TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY = TOTAL INVOLUNTARY RIGHTEOUSNESS.** If one assumes the total hereditary depravity position, then he must also affirm total involuntary righteousness. Calvinists take Romans 5:12 to teach original sin, but the passage teaches no such thing. Read it! “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Calvinists would have us believe sin passed upon all men, for that all have sinned in Adam. The passage says, “death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Now notice verse 19: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” If we are made sinners because of Adams’s personal disobedience and sin, then we are made righteous by virtue of Christ’s personal obedience and righteousness. If this be the case, “let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32).

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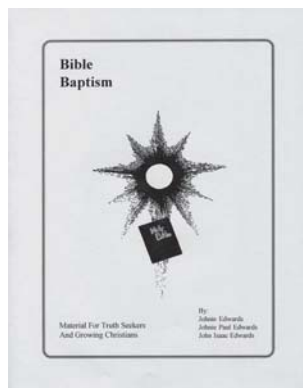
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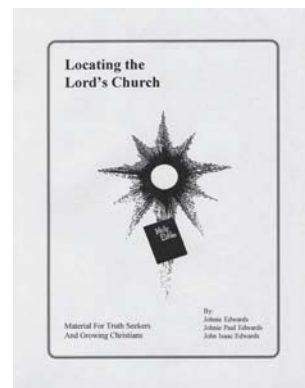
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PREDESTINATION

John Isaac Edwards

The Presbyterian Confession of Faith asserts, “God, from all eternity, did...freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass” (*chap. iii, sec. 1*). It is further stated, “...by the decree of God...some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death...their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished...” (*chap. iii, secs. 3, 4, 5*).

1) **MAN HAS FREE WILL.** The doctrine that God chose the person, individually, to be saved or lost, without involving his or her choice in the matter, robs man of his free will. The Bible teaches man is a creature possessing the power and privilege of choice. Joshua appealed to the Lord’s people, “...choose you this day whom ye will serve...” (Josh. 24:15). Why did he make such an appeal, if God, from all eternity, did freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass? If man does not have free will, Moses did not know it. Hebrews 11:24-25 records, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” John said, “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). This strikes at the very heart of the matter.

2) **GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.** If God chose you to be lost, but me to be saved that would make Him a respecter of persons. If it can be shown that God is not partial, then this religious error will have been answered. Proof abounds as to the impartiality of God. Peter

declared, “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

3) **GOD CHOSE THE PLACE WHERE MEN ARE SAVED.** God did not choose the person, individually, to be saved; He chose the place where men are saved. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:4-5). This shows God chose us in Christ and salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Those in Christ were predestined to be saved, while those outside of Christ were predestined to be lost. Whether one gets into Christ or not, by being “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27), is his choice.

4) **MAN WILL BE LOST BECAUSE HE CHOSE NOT TO OBEY.** Men and women will not be lost because God personally chose them to be lost, but because they personally chose not to obey (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Th. 1:8-9). Do you think God would call upon man to obey Him, point out the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience, make him in such a way that he cannot obey and then punish him for not obeying? That is the God of Calvinism, but that is not the God of the Bible!

It is interesting that any I’ve ever met who held this position claimed to be predestined to be saved. You would think somewhere along the way you would meet one predestined to be lost!

IMPOSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY

Johnie Edwards

Many have been taught the false doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy! The doctrine is known as once saved, always saved; one cannot fall away as to be finally and eternally lost; once in grace, always in grace; or the security of the believer. It is the design of this article to examine the subject in light of Bible teaching.

1) **ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE.** The doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy did not originate with God, but is a relic of Calvinism. It stems from the doctrine “that God decreed before the world began that a certain elect number should be saved and a number just as certain be fixed, could not be saved, neither group could be increased nor diminished.” The idea is that if one’s salvation is settled from eternity, he cannot be lost! He is destined to be either lost or saved. Yet, I read that “God is not a respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11).

2) **WARNINGS AGAINST SINNING.** It is rather strange that God warns His people against sinning, if one could not sin; don’t you think? Writing the Corinthians, Paul warned, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). Why tell a person to be careful lest he fall, if he couldn’t fall?

3) **EXAMPLES OF SOME WHO SINNED AND FELL AWAY.** The Bible is full of examples of those who sinned and fell away. Simon of Acts 8 serves as a good example of this. The Bible says he “believed, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done” (Acts 8:13). So, according to Mark 16:16, he was saved; right? As he “saw that through laying on

of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power...” (Acts 8:17-18). Peter then charged him with not having the right kind of heart and told him to “repent and pray, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:21-22). Simon then asked for prayer on his behalf. There are other examples of those who fell away, like those in Galatians 5:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-11.

4) **INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO KEEP FROM FALLING AWAY.** Peter admonished folks, “add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Peter then said, “...if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; but an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom...” (2 Pet. 1:10-11). Why such language if one cannot so sin as to be lost? Anyone have an answer?

5) **WHAT TO DO WHEN ONE SINS.** The Bible tells a Christian to repent of his sins and confess such unto God in prayer (Acts 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9). Why tell a person what to do if he sins, if he can’t sin? If one sins and does not correct it, he will be eternally lost (Lk. 13:3). Suppose a child of God does not confess his sins?

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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY

John Isaac Edwards

The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches affirms justification is “solely through faith in Christ (p. 62). According to The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, faith “is the alone instrument of justification (p. 60). The Discipline of the Methodist Church states, “Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort” (p. 32). Now, what saith the Scripture? Are we justified by faith only?

1) **CONTRADICTS JAMES 2:24.** The Bible plainly says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). To affirm justification by faith only is to deny the Bible, and to affirm the Bible is to deny the constitutions of men.

2) **MANY THINGS JUSTIFY.** It is true that we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1), but there are other things which are said to justify: God (Rom. 8:33), Christ (Is. 53:11), grace (Ti. 3:7), blood (Rom. 5:9), and works (Jas. 2:24). To say we are justified by faith alone is to exclude everything else the Bible says justifies!

3) **NO MORE PROFITABLE THAN SAYING PEACE ONLY.** James asked, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?” (Jas. 2:14). Now comes an illustration: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (Jas. 2:15-16). Ready for the answer and application? “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (Jas. 2:17).

4) **THE DEVILS BELIEVE.** James 2:19 records, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” Will the devils be saved? Matthew 8:28-34 finds Jesus casting out devils. If faith is the alone instrument of justification, and the devils believe, then Jesus cast out the justified!

5) **ABRAHAM AND RAHAB.** To learn there is more to justification than faith only, read the stories of Abraham and Rahab (Jas. 2:21-25). One word, in each story, does away with the idea of faith only justification. Abraham *offered* (Jas. 2:21) and Rahab *received* (Jas. 2:25). Faith without works is imperfect!

6) **THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD.** Here is the bottom line of James 2: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (v. 26). As it takes the union of body and spirit to constitute life (Eccl. 12:7), faith must be coupled with works. If you have faith alive without works, then you have a body alive without a spirit!

7) **JUSTIFIED WITHOUT FAITH.** If we can be justified without works, then we can be justified without faith; for faith is a work! The Lord said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn. 6:29).

8) **JUDGED UNNECESSARILY.** As John was allowed to see the judgment scene, he saw “the dead, small and great...judged...according to their works” (Rev. 20:12-13). If works have nothing to do with justification, then we will be judged unnecessarily; for we will be judged according to our works!

MAN DOES NOT HAVE AN IMMORTAL SOUL

Johnie Edwards

Many teach that man does not have an eternal spirit! A good example of religious error concerning the soul can be seen in this statement: "Thus we learn that man is a combination of two things; namely, the dust of the ground and the breath of life, produced a living soul or creature called man. Nowhere is it stated that Adam was given an immortal soul. There is not one Bible text that states the human soul is immortal..." (*Let God Be True*, pp. 68-69). According to this, man is just dust and breath; that's all! So, we examine this religious error in light of Bible teaching.

1) **MAN HAS A SPIRIT IN HIS BODY.** Job wrote, "But there is a *spirit* in man: and the inspiration of the almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Zechariah said, "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, said the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the *spirit* of man within him" (Zech. 12:1). There is something in man called the spirit. The Bible refers to man's flesh and soul. "But his *flesh* upon him shall have pain, and his *soul* within him shall mourn" (Job. 14:22). Daniel said he had a spirit in his body. "I Daniel was grieved in my *spirit in the midst of my body*, and the visions of my head troubled me" (Dan. 7:15). Paul told the Corinthians, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit* of man *which is in him...*?" (1 Cor. 2:11).

2) **THE SOUL CAN DEPART THE BODY.** There is something about man that can depart and come into him. What is it? At the death of Rachel, something left her. Moses wrote, "And it came to pass, as her *soul* was in departing, (for she

died)..." (Gen. 35:8). What left Rachel, if it was not her spirit? Something also came into the widow's son when he was revived. What was it? 1 Kings 17:22 says, "... the *soul* of the child came into him again and he revived." Surely, we know that his body did not come into his body again, since some think man is totally mortal. So, the soul or spirit can depart and come into one's body! When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, he refers to being "in the body or out of the body..." (2 Cor. 12:1-14). This Scripture teaches the possibility of one living apart from his physical body! Physical death is described by James, when he penned, "For as the body without the *spirit* is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). There is something that leaves the body at death. If it is not the eternal spirit, what is it?

3) **WE ARE TWO MEN.** Man is composed of two parts: the outward man and the inward man. Paul penned, "For which cause we faint not; but though the *outward man* perish, the *inward man* is renewed day by day...for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are *eternal...*" (2 Cor. 4:16-18). The seen-body is temporal but the unseen-spirit is eternal! Moses declared, at the creation, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Peter spoke of the "hidden man of the heart" as being the spirit, as he contrasted the body with the inner man; the spirit. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet *spirit*, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4). Jesus affirmed the value of a man's spirit when He said, "For what

is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own *soul*? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul*” (Mt. 16:26)?

5) MEN LIVE AFTER PHYSICAL DEATH.

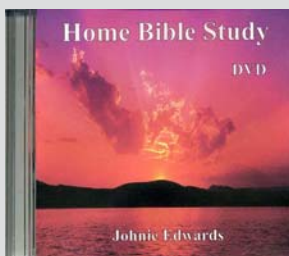
There is something about man that lives after death. The Psalmist recorded, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is there strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and *we fly away*” (Ps. 90:10). We know that the physical body does not fly away; so, that leaves our eternal spirit that flies away. The *we* is the spirit and the body goes back to dust. It’s like the wise man said, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the *spirit* shall return unto God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). A reading of 2 Corinthians 5:1-6 will tell us that the *we* is our house that is eternal. We must remember that, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living...” (Lk. 20:37-38). Evidently, there is something about man that lives after physical

death. The faithful child of God has “hope in his death” (Prov. 14:32). Paul told the Colossians that their hope was “laid up in heaven” (Col. 1:4-5).

5) USE OF THE WORD “SOUL.”

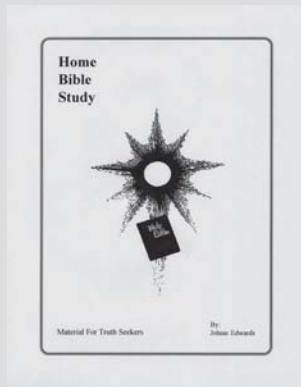
As we discuss the word “soul” with folks, we must be aware of the different ways the word is used in the Bible. Sometimes, the word “soul” refers to the whole person, body and spirit, as in 1 Peter 3:20, where “eight *souls* were saved by water.” Noah and his house were saved, body and spirit, from the flood waters. Acts 7:14 mentions “seventy-five souls” whom Joseph called out of Egypt. These folks went out of Egypt, body and soul. On the other hand, the word refers to man’s eternal spirit, like in 1 Peter 1:22: “Seeing ye have purified your *souls* in obeying the truth...” Man does not purify his physical body when he obeys the truth, but the inner man is made pure. Remember this distinction in the Biblical use of the word “soul,” when you talk with folks who believe that man does not have an eternal spirit.

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THE IMPENITENT WILL BE REDUCED TO NONEXISTENCE

John Isaac Edwards

Among fundamental beliefs of Seventh-Day Adventists, according to their Church Manual compiled by the General Conference Committee, Seventh-Day Adventists believe: "That the finally impenitent, including Satan, the author of sin, will, by the fires of the last day, be reduced to a state of nonexistence, becoming as though they had not been, thus purging the universe of God of sin and sinners." If the impenitent will be reduced to nonexistence:

1) **JESUS DID NOT TEACH IT.** In His teaching concerning the judgment verdict, Jesus declared, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from ye, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). The Lord taught that the abode of the sinner, following the judgment, will be commensurate with the abode of the righteous. "And these [cursed sinners] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mt. 25:46).

2) **PAUL DID NOT KNOW IT.** If this annihilation doctrine be true, the Lord did not inform Paul of it and unto Paul did not the Holy Spirit reveal it. Thus, into all truth was he not guided (Jn. 16:13); for, in all his writings, not a word is said about it! Since the things written by Paul bear the divine label of "scripture" (2 Pet. 3:15-16) and "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), those who believe sinners will be reduced to nonexistence believe something that is not of God. To the contrary, Paul taught, "wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. 2:5-9). Let the nonexistence advocates tell us how a soul can experience such when it is as though it had not been.

3) **THE HEBREW WRITER DID NOT PEN IT.** The epistle to the Hebrews reads, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:28-29). Let the annihilation people explain how extinction is *sorer punishment* than death without mercy.

4) **JOHN DID NOT SEE IT.** The Spirit by John revealed, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). Does that sound like a state of nonexistence to you? *For ever and ever* is the same expression used with reference to God in Revelation 4:8-9. The day sinners are reduced to nonexistence is the day God ceases to exist!

The Scriptures nowhere teach that sinners will be reduced to a state of nonexistence, but that they will suffer an unending state of conscious torment.

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THE KINGDOM IS YET TO BE ESTABLISHED

Johnie Edwards

To many the kingdom of Christ is yet to be established. This religious error has been referred to as premillennialism and many religious bodies hold to this error, including some churches of Christ.

1) **THE ERROR DEFINED.** This doctrine takes on many twists and turns, but, to put it simply, premillennialism says Jesus will return to Jerusalem, set up a material kingdom and rule a thousand years on the earth as Jews return to Palestine. We will now examine this religious error.

2) **LAND PROMISE FULFILLED.** Those thinking the kingdom is yet to be set up, and that Jesus will come back to earth and set up an earthly kingdom with the Jews coming to an unclaimed land, fail to realize Israel has already received the land promise of Genesis 12; 13:15; 15:18. Joshua said God has already fulfilled that land promise and, “that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; *all are come to pass* unto you, and *not one thing failed thereof*” (Josh. 23:14).

3) **KINGDOM PROPHECIES.** Read any prophecies concerning the establishment of the Lord’s kingdom and you can find their fulfillment when the church was established. Daniel said the kingdom would originate in the days of “these kings” (Dan. 2:44). *These kings* had reference to the Roman kingdom, the fourth of the world empires as seen in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of Daniel 2. The Romans were in power, according to Mark 1:14-15 and Luke 20:22-25, when the kingdom was set up (Acts 2).

4) **THE KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE LIFETIME OF SOME DISCIPLES.** Mark 9:1 states, “Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” We are told that when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, they would receive “power” (Acts 1:8). So, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, the power came and when the power came the kingdom would be established. Acts 2 reveals the establishment of the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47). So, the kingdom, which is the church, had its beginning in Acts 2!

5) **THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED WHEN CHRIST WENT TO GOD IN A CLOUD.** Daniel 7:13-14 reveals that when “one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days...he would be given...a kingdom.” So, if we can find where Jesus went to God in a cloud, we will know that the kingdom has been set up. That will not be hard to find! Acts 1:9-11 finds Jesus taken up in a cloud. Then, in the very next chapter, the gospel, for the first time was preached, men heard it, believed it and obeyed it, “and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:22-47). After Acts 2, the kingdom of Christ is spoken of as being in existence as the Colossians were “translated into the kingdom of his dear son” (Col. 1:13). Rather difficult to be translated into something that has not yet been established; don’t you think?

Search The Scriptures Daily!

Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: *“But 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).

Be Ready To Answer Error

If we are to successfully answer religious error, we must be **READY** to give answer, as you can read in the memory verse above. Fill in the acrostic below to show some things we must do to be **READY** to give a Bible answer.

1. If we are to understand God’s word so that we can answer religious error, we must first _____ (Eph. 3:4).

R _____

2. To teach others, we should first _____ ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5).

E _____

3. In defending the truth, you must _____ put people in remembrance of God’s word (2 Pet. 1:12).

A _____

4. To have God’s word established in us, we must be _____ to His fear (Ps. 119:38).

D _____

5. To take the Lord’s work of teaching the truth and answering error is to take His _____ (Mt. 11:29-30).

Y _____

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).

Question: *“Is there any Bible authority for common law marriage?” And, “A woman who has never been married, marries a divorced man...?”*

Answer: **COMMON LAW MARRIAGE**

I do not recall reading anything in the Bible about common law marriage; do you? In essence, common law marriage begins by just living together unmarried. This the word of God will not tolerate. The Bible that I read says, “...to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). Just living together, unmarried, is but to commit the sin of fornication. Fornication is among the sins listed in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, with the consequence being, such “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Sometimes the laws of men differ from the laws of God. When such occurs, we must heed these words: “...we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The Hebrew writer stated, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). If we start condoning “common law marriage,” we are only encouraging couples to just live together, unmarried. And, who is ready for that? I would recommend that if you are just living together, unmarried, if the two have the Scriptural right to be married, get married!

NEVER MARRIED WOMAN MARRIES DIVORCED MAN

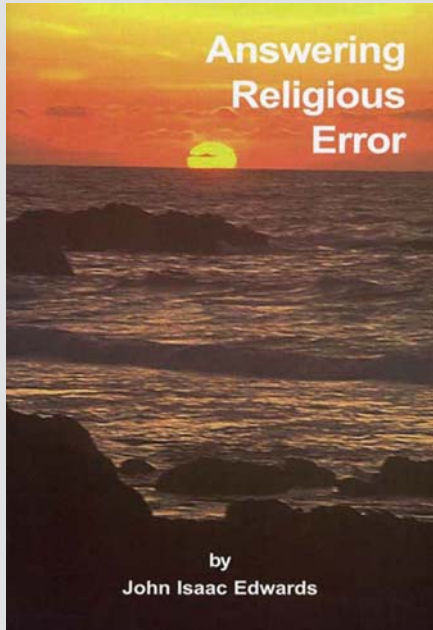
“A woman who has never been married marries a man who had an unlawful divorce from his first wife. If the husband commits adultery and his second wife divorces him, does she have the right to remarry?”

The woman who marries a man who has an unscriptural marriage is living in adultery, for Jesus stated, “Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery” (Mt. 19:9). First, the woman needs to repent of her fornication/adultery, as she had no Scriptural right to be married to this man. If she now puts him away for fornication, she could remarry one who has the Scriptural right to marry. Romans 7:2-3 is the only passage that tells us why a subsequent marriage is adulterous. Notice the “so then if” of verse 3. It points back to the fact that the woman is bound to her first husband in verse 2. The reason a subsequent marriage is adulterous is that there is a bond to a previous mate. If there is no bond, there is no adultery. Thus, the one in the question before us would not commit adultery if she remarries.

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