

Back To Basics

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WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

Johnie Edwards

Who has not sung, *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*, written in 1857 by Joseph Scriven, of Dublin, Ireland? His loneliness and sorrow at the death of his bride-to-be who drowned on the eve of his intended wedding day, with a second fiancée to die, and later to comfort his ailing sick mother, wrote this hymn to remind her of her never-failing friend, Jesus. We need to sing this song often to learn some great lessons.

• **JESUS IS CALLED OUR FRIEND.** John writes, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you...I call you not servants...but friends...” (Jn. 15:13-15).

• **JESUS BORE OUR SINS/GRIEFS.** The heart of the prophets, Isaiah 53:4-5 declares, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” The Holy Spirit said, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”

(Heb. 2:9). Romans 5:6-10 says it all! The gospel would not be complete without the death of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-4) and His ascension back to God (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 1:9-11). He became a “ransom for all” (Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

• **JESUS IS THE MEDIATOR.** As the people of God, we have the privilege of carrying everything to God in prayer as we “pray without ceasing” (1 Th. 5:17) and “in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). Paul told Timothy, “For there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). It is so sad that many do not make good use of this means to talk with God.

• **JESUS PROVIDES PEACE.** The gospel is “the gospel of peace” (Rom. 10:15). Jesus left us with “peace” (Jn. 14:27) and “peace” is in Him (Jn. 16:33). Being in the kingdom of Christ is said to be “peace” (Rom. 14:17). Paul told the Ephesians that Jesus “is our peace” (Eph. 2:14). Sometimes we have no peace because we “do not carry every thing to God in prayer.” Talking to God is a most wonderful blessing that few really have. How sad it is that some fail to use it, except in an emergency.

What a song!



THE SOWER'S SEED

Basic Sermon Starters

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH AND WEEPETH, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED, SHALL DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH REJOICING, BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM."

BASICS OF BIBLE BAPTISM

Introduction

1. Many are getting away from the basics.
2. This study points out some baptism basics.

Discussion

I. BAPTISM IS A COMMAND

- A. Baptism is not optional, but is commanded.
 1. Acts 2:38
 2. Acts 10:48
- B. Bible commands are to be heeded.
 1. Matthew 7:21
 2. Revelation 22:14

II. BAPTISM IS FOR CERTAIN SUBJECTS

- A. Those guilty of sin (Acts 2:38).
- B. Those who have been taught (Mt. 28:19).
- C. Those who believe (Mk. 16:16).
- D. Those who repent (Acts 2:38).
- E. Those who confess Christ (Acts 8:37).

III. BAPTISM IS A BURIAL IN WATER

- A. Baptism is not a sprinkling or pouring, but a burial or immersion.

1. Romans 6:3-4

2. Colossians 2:12

- B. Baptism demonstrated in Acts 8:36-39 shows a burial in water.

IV. BAPTISM WASHES AWAY SINS

- A. We become guilty of sin as we transgress God's law (1 Jn. 3:4).
- B. In Bible days, what did a man have to do to have his sins washed away?
 1. Acts 22:16
 2. He had to be baptized.

V. BAPTISM PUTS US INTO CHRIST & THE CHURCH

- A. Baptism puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27).
- B. Baptism puts us into the body (1 Cor. 12:13), which is the church (Col. 1:24).

VI. BAPTISM SAVES

- A. Mark 16:16
- B. 1 Peter 3:21

Conclusion

1. There is no better time to be baptized.
2. Come now as we sing.

Back To Basics

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GALATIANS 6:10 IN CONTEXT

John Isaac Edwards

Galatians 6:10 has often been used as a proof text in support of helping non-saints from the church treasury. The context shows the disciple individually is under consideration; not the church collectively.

• **INSTRUCTION FOR CLASSES WITHIN THE CHURCH.** In the letters to the churches, there is instruction directed to a specific group of people within the church. The responsibility, in Galatians 6:1, to restore a man overtaken in a fault is not directed to the church as a whole, but to “ye which are spiritual.” The teaching, in Galatians 6:6, to “communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” is aimed at “him that is taught in the word.” In every church, there are these groups of people: (1) the spiritual and the carnal; (2) those who teach and those who are taught. Instruction may be given to one that is not given to the other.

• **INDIVIDUAL WORDS.** Just as letters to individuals may contain instruction concerning the church (take Paul’s letter to Timothy, for example, 1 Tim. 3:15), letters to churches may include instruction to individuals. The context must determine which is under discussion. This is the case with Paul’s letter “unto the churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2). Observe the words, in Galatians 6, that address the individual (you might want to circle or highlight these in your Bible): “thyself” (v. 1), “thou” (v. 1), “a man” (v. 3), “himself” (v. 3), “he” (v. 3), “himself” (v. 3), “every man” (v. 4), “his own” (v. 4), “he” (v. 4), “himself alone” (v. 4), “every man” (v. 5), “his own” (v. 5), “him” (v. 6), “a man” (v. 7), “he” (v. 7), “he” (v. 8), “he” (v. 8). Is the church a thyself, a thou, a man, a himself, a he, a his, or a him? Individual words indicate individual work!

• **THINGS NOT MENTIONED.** Men read into Galatians 6 things not even mentioned in the chapter.

Did you read anything about the church taking up a collection for non-saints? To learn about a collection, you have to read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, and it says, “the collection for the saints.” And so men use a passage (Galatians 6:10) that does not even mention a collection to find authority for a collection for non-saints, and ignore the passage that speaks of a collection (1 Cor. 16:1-2), which is limited to “the saints.”

Galatians 6 also finds the Galatians being constrained to be circumcised (vv. 12-13). *Question:* Do you circumcise a man or a church?

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A TALEBEARER

Melba Edwards

The Lord spake unto Moses and said, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Lev. 19:16). Many friendships are severed because of talebearing. Churches can be torn apart because of this sin. Souls are lost because of it. A talebearer is a whisperer, busybody, or slanderer. Let’s see what the Bible reveals about talebearing.

- **A TALEBEARER REVEALETH SECRETS.** Proverbs 11:13 reveals, “A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” Some people just can’t wait to hear something so they can tell someone else. The contrast in this text shows we are either a talebearer or one of a faithful spirit. One of a faithful spirit keeps the matter to himself, while the talebearer tells all or slanders. Proverbs 20:19 says, “He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.” In other words, don’t associate with him! Next time we are tempted to tell a matter, we need to remember these passages.

- **THE WORDS OF A TALEBEARER ARE AS WOUNDS.** Again Solomon wrote, in Proverbs 18:8 and 26:22, “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” Their words cut clear through. The NKJV reads, “The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles...” To the talebearer, they may seem really good, but they can cause massive destruction. This talebearer is a whisperer or busybody. Paul warned the younger widows

against such in 1 Timothy 5:13. “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” One thing that leads to being a talebearer is idleness. If we are busy with the Lord’s work, we don’t have time to be a talebearer. Paul also wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:11, “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” In verse 12, he tells them to work, and eat their own bread. In verse 13, we are to note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Talebearers walk disorderly and are subjects of withdrawal.

- **WHERE THERE IS NO TALEBEARER, THE STRIFE CEASES.** We again look to Solomon’s writing in Proverbs 26:20 which tells us, “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.” Talebearing causes strife or contentions.

Don’t be a talebearer! Don’t be one who reveals secrets. Be one of a faithful spirit. Get busy doing the Lord’s work to keep from becoming a talebearer. Avoid, stay away from, don’t associate with a talebearer. It may determine where we spend eternity. Remember what the Lord said in Matthew 12:36-37. “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

In Few Words

IS SIN INHERITED?

According to *GotQuestions.org*, sin is passed along from generation to generation. “The original sin of Adam and Eve was passed along to us as an inheritance. Our parents inherited the sins of their parents and we inherited their sins as well. We will pass our sins along to our children and they will pass it along to their children.” This well expresses the belief and doctrine of many religious groups. But, where does the Bible teach inherited sin? The Scripture saith, “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” (Ezek. 18:20). This Scripture shows that neither iniquity nor righteousness is inherited.

ON BEING CALLED “LUTHERAN”

There are those who call themselves, “Lutheran,” after the name of the sixteenth century reformer, Martin Luther. Lutherans hold to the teachings of Luther (for example, that a man is justified by faith alone which Luther taught, but the Bible does not teach). Those who call themselves Lutheran need to know what Martin Luther had to say about wearing his name.

“I ask that my name be left silent and people not call themselves Lutheran, but rather Christians...How should I, a poor stinking bag of worms, become so that the children of Christ are named with my unholy name? It should not be dear friends. Let us extinguish all factious names and be called Christians...” (*Martin Luther, Admonition Against Insurrection, 1522*).

Why do people call themselves Lutheran, when Luther asked that people not call themselves Lutheran? Let us extinguish all factious names, wear the name of Christ, the name above all names (Eph. 1:21), and do all in His name (Col. 3:17).

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BAPTIST MANUAL

The following quotations show that the *Baptist Standard Manual* does not agree with itself.

“We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation of sinners is **wholly of grace**” (p. 61).

“We believe the Scriptures teach that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but **solely through faith** in Christ...” (p. 62).

The word “solely” means without another and “wholly” means entirely. Salvation cannot be “wholly of grace” and, at the same time, be “solely through faith.” The two statements contradict each other as you can see.

Neither statement is true. It is true that we are justified by grace (Ti. 2:11) and by faith (Rom. 5:1), but we are not saved by grace alone or by faith alone. Since we are “saved by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8), salvation is not by or through either solely or wholly!

THREE “R’S” FOR YOUTH

Ecclesiastes records three “R’s” for youth as Solomon made his appeal to the young man.

• **REJOICE.** Youth is a time to be happy! “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth...” (Eccl. 11:9).

• **REMOVE.** Youth is also a time for removing some things. “Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh” (Eccl. 11:10).

• **REMEMBER.** “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccl. 12:1). Young people, keep in mind there is a God, that He loves you, and be mindful of your responsibilities to Him.

Thru-the-Bible

THE PATRIARCHS: ISAAC #1

JACOB AND ESAU

GENESIS 25:19-34

SHANE WILLIAMS

The text of Genesis 25:19-34 reveals some good lessons from the patriarch Isaac, his wife, and their two children.

- **PRAYER RESPONSE.** Isaac is 40 years old when he and Rebekah marry (Gen. 28:20). Rebekah is barren and Isaac prays on her behalf to conceive. The Lord grants Isaac's prayer (v. 21). Often, we expect an answer to our prayers right away. Yet, God shows, over and over, that His will is done within His time frame. Although we are not told how long after the marriage Isaac prays for his wife, we do know that he is 60 years old when the twins are born (v. 26). Twenty years pass before they have children! A similar example is seen in Isaac's father, Abraham. There are 25 years that pass between God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12 and when Isaac is born (Gen. 12:4; 21:5). During that time, there was concern about how these things would come about (Gen. 15-16). Even after Ishmael is born, 14 years pass before Isaac is born (Gen. 16:16; 21:5). God works in His own time.

- **FAVORITISM.** The children struggled within Rebekah during her pregnancy and she inquired of the Lord about it (v. 22). The Lord told her she was carrying two nations, one stronger than the other. Esau and Jacob turn out to be quite different. Esau is a hairy skilled hunter. Jacob is a smooth tent dweller. Preference is shown by Isaac for Esau and by Rebekah for Jacob (v. 28). This would have caused numerous problems growing up, as their affections were divided. We

can see the trouble that is caused later on, when Rebekah takes it upon herself to obtain Esau's blessing for Jacob (Gen. 27). When distinction is made between children, it will lead to unhappy consequences. Parents must raise their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). That will be difficult if one child is "preferred" above another.

- **BIRTHRIGHT.** The text tells us that Esau comes in famished from a hunt. He sees Jacob with some stew and wants some. Jacob asks him to sell his birthright to him first. Esau agrees! The birthright was "the right which naturally belonged to the first son" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). The birthright of the firstborn consisted of a double portion of what his father had to leave. The firstborn became head of the family and thus succeeded to the charge of the family property, becoming responsible for the maintenance of the younger sons, the widow or widows, and the unmarried daughters (*ISBE*). It was no small matter when Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. Being hungry from a long hunt was not an appropriate reason to sell his birthright. "Thus Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:34). The New Testament mentions Esau's birthright in Hebrews 12:16. Concerning a danger of coming short of the grace of God, the writer mentions Esau as an example of immorality and godlessness.

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ENJOY GETTING BACK TO BASICS?

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THE PATRIARCHS: ISAAC #2

ISAAC AND ABIMELECH

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB

GENESIS 26:1-28:9

JOHN GENTRY

After Abraham's death, the unfolding of the Lord's scheme of redemption continued through Isaac.

• **GOD'S PROMISES TO ISAAC.** The framework of the scheme of redemption, as unfolded in the Old Testament, was the threefold promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3, 7); namely, 1) a great nation—"descendants as many as the stars of heaven" (Heb. 11:12), 2) the promised land, 3) all nations blessed through his seed. In Genesis 26:2-4, the Lord made these same promises to Isaac "because Abraham obeyed my voice..." (v. 5).

• **ISAAC'S TREACHERY.** In Genesis 26:1, we learn "there was a famine in the land." Isaac headed toward Egypt. However, the Lord told him not to go to Egypt, "so Isaac settled in Gerar" (vv. 2-3, 6). When asked about Rebekah, Isaac lied and said she was his sister (v. 7). As a result, he sinned and put the men of Gerar in a position to sin. Situation ethics is nothing new. Isaac thought he might die if he told the truth. Sin is always sin, no matter what!

• **ISAAC'S PROSPERITY.** "The Lord blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy" (Gen. 26:12-13). As a result, "the Philistines envied him" (v. 14) and Abimelech, king of the Philistines, said to Isaac, "Go away from us..." (v. 16). Isaac departed and attempted to settle in various

locations. However, he was hindered by "the herdsmen of Gerar." They quarreled and claimed the wells belonged to them. Isaac was finally able to dig a well without the herdsmen hindering him (vv. 17-22). He then went to Beersheba (v. 23). While there, Abimelech went to him and made a peace treaty with him (vv. 26-31).

• **REBEKAH'S DECEIT.** "When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim...", he desired to give a blessing to Esau and instructed him to prepare a meal before receiving the blessing (Gen. 27:1-4). Rebekah overheard the conversation and desired Jacob receive the blessing instead of Esau. She instructed Jacob to deceive Isaac into thinking he was Esau by putting on some of Esau's clothes and by taking a meal to Isaac (vv. 5-17). Isaac believed Jacob was Esau and gave him the blessing instead (vv. 18-29). This blessing made Jacob ruler over Esau (the older brother). Upon Esau's arrival, Isaac said he could not take back or repent of the blessing given to Jacob (vv. 30-40; Heb. 12:17). Esau was furious and premeditated the murder of Jacob (v. 41). Deceit among brethren will truly cause destruction of one another. We must always tell the truth!

• **JACOB SENT TO LABAN.** Rebekah learned of Esau's plot to commit fratricide. She persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to the house of her brother Laban to find a wife so that he would not take a wife from among the Canaanites and end up with a loathsome and life-wearying wife such as Esau had (Gen. 27:42-28:5). Esau had married two Hittite women that "made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah" (Gen. 27:34-35) and, in an attempt to please them, he married a daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:8-9). Two wrongs do not make a right! Jacob went to Paddan-aram (Gen. 28:5).

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Thru-the-Bible

THE PATRIARCHS: JACOB #1

JACOB'S VOW

JACOB MEETS RACHEL

GENESIS 28:10-29:30

CRAIG THOMAS

There's much we can learn from Jacob "the supplanter" or "deceiver." All of us should be able to see some of ourselves in Jacob. Haven't you at some point trusted more in your own "powers" to get ahead than on the care and providence of God? Haven't you at times striven with God before finally and fully surrendering to His will? If you answered "yes," then you, as I, can identify with Jacob!

• **JACOB'S DREAM.** Unlike Esau (Gen. 28:8-9), Jacob obeyed his parent's desire not to "take a wife from the daughters of Canaan" (Gen. 28:6-7). On his journey to fulfill his marital mission, Jacob spent the night near Luz, or Bethel, (Gen. 28:10-22). Here he encountered God in a dream (vv. 12-15). In his dream, he sees and hears what we all should realize: God takes care of our every need (Mt. 6:25-34; Heb. 13:5), and he assures us He will fulfill every promise, regardless of how fantastic or remote they may seem (Eph. 3:20). For Jacob, God reiterated His threefold promise to Abraham, of which Jacob was the recipient through his father, Isaac. How remote it must have seemed to the unmarried Jacob that his "descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (v. 14). How about you and me? Do we have the humility to realize we are totally reliant upon God for all things? (1 Pet. 5:5-7). Do we have the faith to realize God will fulfill every promise? (1 Cor. 1:8-10; 10:13; 1 Pet. 4:19;

Rev. 22:6-7). Or, do we continue to strive using our own "strength?"

• **JACOB'S VOW.** After receiving God's assurances, Jacob made a vow to accept Jehovah as his God IF Jehovah met his temporal needs and returned him safely to his parent's home (Gen. 28:20-21). How about you and me? Do we also sweat the small stuff (e.g., food, clothing, job, etc.)? If so, how do we ever hope to trust God on the "big stuff?" (2 Pet. 1:2-4; Ps. 23; Rev. 2:10).

• **JACOB DEALS WITH LABAN.** Genesis 29:1-30 records Jacob's meeting Rachel and his initial dealings with his uncle Laban. Jacob had well earned the name "deceiver" for the way in which he deceptively stole Esau's "birthright" (Gen. 27). However, in Laban, Jacob met his match when it came to deception! Jacob agreed to serve Laban seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage (v. 18), but seven years turned into fourteen when Laban deceived Jacob into first marrying his older daughter, Leah (vv. 23-25). Jacob had his share of character flaws that needed the Lord's refining and his deceptive nature may have been his greatest flaw. No wonder God made him pay such a high price to refine him from being a "deceiver" into becoming "Israel, a prince of God." Sin is a heavy burden and a cruel master (Ps. 7:14-16). Let us be aware that God punishes sin with both eternal and temporal consequences. He does so, not to deny us pleasure and happiness, but so we will live rich and contented lives here and hereafter. Sin is bad not just because God says so, but because it really is bad for us! When we come to the realization God always looks out for our best interests, we will truly abhor evil and cling to good (Rom. 12:9). And then we become worthy of our new name (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; Acts 11:26) and become a "prince of God!"

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THE PATRIARCHS: JACOB #2

THE SONS OF JACOB

JACOB FLEES LABAN

GENESIS 28:10-29:30

CARL PETERSON

God ordained that marriage would be a joining of a man and a woman and separation from each one's parents (Gen. 2:24). There is no better example of why this is the best way to do things than Jacob.

• **JACOB'S WIVES AND CHILDREN.** Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. As a result, God opened Leah's womb and allowed her to bear children, creating a source of animosity between Leah. Leah bore children (and had her maid bear them) in an effort to get Jacob to love her (as seen in the meaning of the names Levi and Zebulun). Rachel bore children (and had her maid bear them) in an effort to show her superiority over Leah in their conflict (as seen in the names Dan and Naphtali). In all, Leah bore six sons and a daughter (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah), Rachel bore one child by the time Jacob left Laban (Joseph) and two each by their maids Bilhah and Zilpah (Dan and Naphtali to Bilhah, Gad and Asher to Zilpah). We see from Jacob's example a reason why God wants people to have only one spouse. Jacob's attention was focused on Rachel. The account records in Genesis 29:31 that "Jacob hated Leah," not necessarily in the absolute sense we infer, but that he hated Leah relative to his love for Rachel. It's hard to cleave to two wives (Gen 2:24), just as it is hard to serve two masters (Mt. 6:24).

• **JACOB'S WAGES.** Laban was profitable because God blessed Jacob. Following the birth

of Joseph, Jacob approached Laban about leaving. Laban, knowing the source of his prosperity, offered to let Jacob name his wages so that he would stay. Jacob asks for all the spotted and speckled animals. What unfolds is a case of deceit begetting deceit. Jacob did what he could to increase his flocks and herds; whenever Jacob's flocks got larger than Laban's, Laban flipped the arrangement, leading Jacob to adjust his methods to bring things back into his favor. Jacob says later that Laban changed his wages ten times (Gen. 31:7). Ultimately, however, God made His servant, Jacob, to prosper.

• **JACOB'S DEPARTURE.** After some time (about 20 years from when he first arrived in Padan-Aram), Jacob chooses to leave. He has worked for a man who changed his wages to suit his own ends and an angel has told him to return to the land of his fathers (Gen. 31:11-13). Jacob goes to his wives to tell them his decision. They agree, and so leave without telling Laban. Laban finds out about this three days later and pursues them. Before meeting with Jacob, he is warned by God in a dream not to speak to Jacob "either good or bad" (Gen. 31:24); that is, don't say anything to change what has already happened or do anything to harm Jacob. Instead, Laban complains that Jacob took his daughters away without giving him a chance to say goodbye. Laban accuses Jacob of stealing the household idols; Rachel stole them, but Laban is unable to find them because she hid them under her seat where she was reclining. Jacob points out that Laban has nothing against him, and they make peace. Just as Laban and Jacob made peace, so do we with our enemies if at all possible. Paul said, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

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MAY THE GUILTY PARTY REMARRY?

Donnie V. Rader

May the guilty party remarry? By “guilty party” we mean the one who has been put away for the cause of fornication. Some of our brethren contend that when a divorce occurs for the cause of fornication, both parties may remarry.

• THE BASIC FALLACY OF THE POSITION.

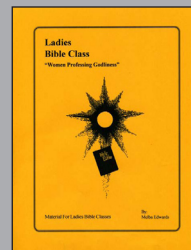
Those who advocate this position equate the marriage and the bond. Here is how it works: If a couple are no longer married, then they are no longer bound. They argue that if it is an unscriptural divorce, they are still really married (thus not free to remarry). However, in the case where one is put away for fornication (a Scriptural divorce), then they are no longer married and both are free to remarry. Romans 7:2-3 shows that the marriage and the bond are not the same. For here, the woman was bound to her first husband, though she was married to another man. A Scriptural marriage is called a marriage (Heb. 13:4; Mt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:9, 28). When a marriage is unscriptural, it is still called a marriage (Mk. 6:17-18; Mt. 19:9; Rom. 7:2-3). The same is true of divorce. The terms “put away” are used to describe both Scriptural and unscriptural divorces (Mt. 19:9; Lk. 16:18). When one understands the clear distinction in the marriage and the bond, he will see the error in this argumentation.

• **NO AUTHORITY FOR THE GUILTY PARTY TO REMARRY.** We cannot act without Bible authority (Col. 3:17; 2 Jn. 9). We must respect the silence of the Scriptures (Heb. 7:14). There is Bible authority for the innocent party to put away the guilty party and remarry (Mt. 5:32; 19:9). There is no Bible passage that authorizes the guilty party to remarry. We oppose the guilty party remarrying for the same reason we oppose instrumental music in worship—no Bible authority.

• **THE GUILTY PART IS FORBIDDEN TO REMARRY.** Jesus said, “...and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Mt. 5:32). In Matthew 19:9, He said, “...and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” Luke records, “...and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (16:18). Notice that there is no exception phrase in the second clause of Matthew 5:32 or 19:9. Some argue that the exception phrase (“except it be for fornication”) applies to both clauses. *The exception does not fit into the second clause grammatically.* As it modifies the first clause it is an adverbial phrase, qualifying “shall put away.” If it modified the second clause it would be an adjectival phrase, qualifying “is put away.” *The exception phrase does not fit into the second clause textually.* I wrote to Bruce Metzger, asking him, “Does the exception clause (‘except it be for fornication’) modify the phrase ‘and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery’?” His answer was, “no, it qualifies the preceding clause.”

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MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, & JOHN—OLD OR NEW TESTAMENT?

John Isaac Edwards

Some are contending that none of the commandments or teachings in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross) are in force today. The teaching of Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross), it is said, was not New Testament teaching, but Old Testament teaching taken directly from the law of Moses and the prophets. We are told that the only thing binding on us today is Acts 2 through Revelation 22 (the New Testament). This view of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John has caused men to teach and practice error regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage, thinking of Matthew 19:3-12 as Old Testament Mosaical teaching for only the Old Testament Jews.

• **A LAW MAY BE ENACTED BEFORE IT TAKES EFFECT.** A new law went into effect September 20th, in the state of Maine, prohibiting anyone less than 18 years old from driving while using a mobile phone or handheld electronic device. According to Maine's Constitution, laws enacted by the Legislature take effect 90 days after the session's end. This is an example where a law may be stated and enacted before it takes effect. Dictating a new law while the old law is in effect does not make the new law part of the old law! In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross), Jesus was stating and enacting His law or will that would take effect after He died, "For a testament is of force after men are dead" (Heb. 9:17). We realize that while Jesus was alive, the old law of Moses was in effect. This is why He kept the law and referred others to it as He did the rich, young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22. But it does not change the fact that He stated laws new and different from the law of Moses that would be in force under the new covenant. We have to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15),

distinguishing between those things Jesus did and said that were part of the law of Moses and those which would be included in the new covenant.

• **THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN.** Luke 16:16 shows the fallacy of this position. "The law and the prophets were until John..." In what sense were the law and the prophets until John? It is not in the sense that they were abolished when John came for that was done by the death of Christ (Eph. 2:15). The last part of this verse explains the first. "...since that time (that is, since John came, JIE) the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The New American Standard Version says, "The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John..." From John forward, the emphasis is not on the law and the prophets, but on the kingdom. Mark 1:1 says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk. 1:1). After John was put in prison, Jesus "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mk. 1:14). Jesus chose twelve apostles and "sent them to preach the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:2). The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of the kingdom and the kingdom-gospel is not the law of Moses! Forasmuch as the gospel of the kingdom was preached before the cross, there are teachings in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross) that would be in force when the kingdom was established. Does the kingdom of God belong to the Old Testament or the New Testament? How could all of Jesus' teaching be directly from the law of Moses and the prophets when the law and the prophets were until John and Jesus was after John?

• **THINGS JESUS TAUGHT THAT ARE NOT FOUND IN THE LAW OF MOSES.** To see that the

teaching of Jesus was not taken directly from the law and the prophets, as asserted, observe what Jesus said that is nowhere found in the law or the prophets.

The teaching concerning the new birth. Jesus told Nicodemus, "...except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3). Where is this teaching found in the law or the prophets? The new birth of John 3 is the same birth we read about in 1 Peter 1:22-23.

The teaching about worship. In the conversation with the woman at the well, recorded in John 4, the Samaritans worshiped "in this mountain" and the Jews said "in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (v. 20). Jesus taught the time would come when the place of worship would not matter, saying, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (Jn. 4:23). Clearly, Jesus was not teaching the law of Moses.

The teaching in Matthew 18:15-18. Jesus taught, "...if he shall neglect to hear them (two or three witnesses, JIE), tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Mt. 18:17). How could one tell it unto the church, if the church did not exist? No one could tell it to the church until Acts 2. Jesus was teaching principles in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross) that would be applied after the church came into existence.

The teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Several times Jesus said something in contrast to what was stated in the law of Moses. A good example is in Matthew 5:31-32, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Jesus is giving a new law, distinct from the law given by Moses. He is not answering false rabbinical traditions by

restating and restoring the law Moses originally gave. Notice the differences in the two laws: In Deuteronomy 24, the reason for divorce is "uncleanness" (v. 1). This uncleanness wasn't adultery, as in Numbers 5, but some shameful, indecent, or improper behavior short of adultery. The penalty for adultery was death (Dt. 22:22). How could she "go and be another man's wife" (v. 2), when she was dead? In Matthew 5, the reason for divorce is "fornication." In Deuteronomy 24, the put away woman was allowed to marry (v. 2). In Matthew 5, the put away woman is not free to marry (v. 32).

The teaching in the kingdom parables. There are many parables of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, beginning with, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto..." (Mt. 20:1). Either Jesus was teaching things before the cross that would be in force today or the kingdom of heaven belongs to the law of Moses!

• **THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD.** We are told that no part of the New Testament was delivered before the law of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations..." The message Jesus had been preaching would be among the things that would go forth from Jerusalem in all the world. The story of the woman who anointed Jesus before the cross (Mt. 26:6-13) was to be told, "Where-soever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world..." (v. 13). The story of the woman is not found anywhere in Acts 2 through Revelation 22. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (before the cross) contain "this gospel" which was to "be preached in the whole world" "beginning at Jerusalem" (Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47-49).

Evidently Jesus said some things before the cross which would be in force after the cross, for the Holy Spirit would remind the apostles of "all things" Jesus said (Jn. 14:26) and they were to teach men to observe all things (Mt. 28:20).

DOES BAPTISM SANCTIFY ADULTEROUS MARRIAGE?

David Eldridge

There are some who would teach that baptism sanctifies an adulterous marriage, therefore making the marriage holy and right. Their thought is that since baptism washes away sins, that the one who is baptized has the sin of their previous unlawful divorce(s) and remarriage(s) washed away. Then they would assert that the marriage they are currently in is one which is sanctified by God. Basically, the teaching is that one could marry, divorce, and remarry unscripturally (one or ten times), be baptized, and then be holy in the eyes of God with either their current spouse, or if they are currently unmarried, be free to marry again. However, the Scriptures indicate that this is not the case. In considering if baptism sanctifies adulterous marriages, consider the following.

- **BAPTISM IS PRECEDED BY REPENTANCE.** Divorce for reasons other than adultery, and remarriage of any but the innocent party (in the case of adultery) after divorce is sin both for the alien sinner and the saint (Mt. 19:3-9). Peter said one must “repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The sin of being in an adulterous marriage is to be repented of before one is baptized if they are to be forgiven of that sin. Repentance is a change in mind that demonstrates itself in a change of life. Therefore, the one who is to be baptized must leave an adulterous marriage, if they are to truly repent and be forgiven. The fact that one must repent before they are baptized teaches us that baptism does not sanctify adulterous marriages.

- **BAPTISM CHANGES MAN’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.** Baptism does, and does not do, certain things. When one is baptized, he becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26-27), with the hope of an eternal inheritance in Heaven (Ti. 3:7). Thus, baptism

changes man’s relationship to God. However, baptism does not change man’s relationship to his fellow man. Once baptized, one is still the child of their parents, still the parent to their child, and still bound to the spouse God bound them to. Though baptism washes away the sin, baptism does not wash away God’s bond between a husband and his wife. Therefore, if one is bound to a previous husband or wife, but is married to another, they are just as much an adulterer or adulteress as they were before they were baptized. Baptism does not sanctify adulterous marriages because it does not change the binding of God between a husband and wife.

- **SIN BEFORE BAPTISM IS STILL SIN AFTER BAPTISM.** If one was a thief before they were baptized, will baptism sanctify their thievery so they can continue stealing? If one practices homosexuality before baptism, will being baptized sanctify their homosexuality so they can continue practicing homosexuality? Certainly not! Then, if one is in an adulterous marriage prior to being baptized, will their baptism allow them to continue in adultery? Not any more than baptism would allow the thief to keep stealing and the homosexual to continue to commit homosexuality. Remember, the one who is baptized “should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), having “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). Sin before baptism is still sin after baptism—that includes the sin involved in an adulterous marriage.

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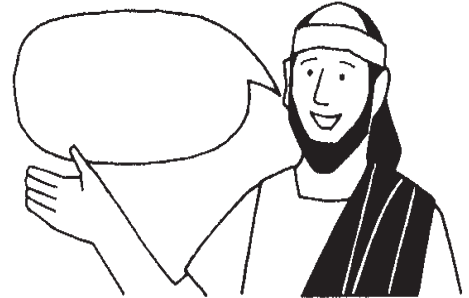
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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

Who Said It? (Old Testament)



"Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3).

"Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).

"Let there be no strife, I pray thee,
between me and thee" (Gen. 13:8).

"How then can I do this great wicked-
ness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

"There shall not an hoof be left
behind" (Ex. 11:26).

"Choose you this day whom
ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15).

"Look on me, and do likewise" (Jud. 7:17).

"Whither thou goest,
I will go" (Ruth 1:16).

"Give us a king" (1 Sam. 8:5-6).

"The battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47).

"Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12:7).

"Behold, I thought" (2 Ki. 5:11).

"Let it be diligently done for the house
of the God of Heaven" (Ezra 7:23).

"Let us build up the wall" (Neh. 2:17).

"If I perish, I perish" (Est. 4:16).

"We will not serve thy gods, nor
worship the golden image" (Dan. 3:18).

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

GOING ON AFTER BAPTISM

Glenn E. Phillips

Unfortunately, there are many who are baptized and go astray, as if they have done all they can for the Lord. Some act as if baptism is the height of their Christian experience. The Bible tells of our responsibility in growing as a Christian (2 Pet. 3:18). Let us examine what the Bible teaches about our responsibility after being baptized into Christ.

• **BE READY TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.** Immediately after being baptized, Paul “preached Christ” (Acts 9:20). We also find in Romans 1:15 where Paul wrote, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” We should always be willing and able to preach and teach the gospel (2 Tim 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:15). Now is the time that God expects us to do His service (2 Cor. 6:2). Ask yourself, “Am I ready to proclaim the gospel of Christ?”

• **STUDY TO SHOW YOURSELF APPROVED.** Study must be applied by the individual striving to show himself approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15). Many times the Christian finds himself wondering why he is not interested in the Bible studies, gospel meetings, etc. The answer is that this Christian has not determined in his mind to remain in God’s grace (Ti. 2:11). He must also study that which will cause him to understand God’s will and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). It is sad for Christians to have enough knowledge to render obedience to the gospel, but afterwards lose their zeal due to lack of study. These Christians produce nothing for themselves, nor for the people with whom they come in contact. A lack of study also hinders others who want and are willing to move forward with other topics of the Bible. These Christians have to be taught again and again on first principles, and are unable to understand the word more fully; much less teach anyone (Heb. 5:12-14). How much exercise have you been doing in God’s word?

• **WALK BY FAITH.** There are also Christians who have been baptized, but do not demonstrate a walk of faith. They exhibit signs of weakness when times get hard or when faced with some opposition, instead of seeking the kingdom of heaven first (Mt. 6:33). This may include forsaking the assembling (Heb. 10:25), and not being able to train yourself to teach others (Heb. 5:12). Paul instructed the Christians at Philippi to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). When we walk by faith we will be walking in the light with Christ (1 Jn. 1:7). Looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing in it will ensure a faithful walk with God (Jas. 1:25).

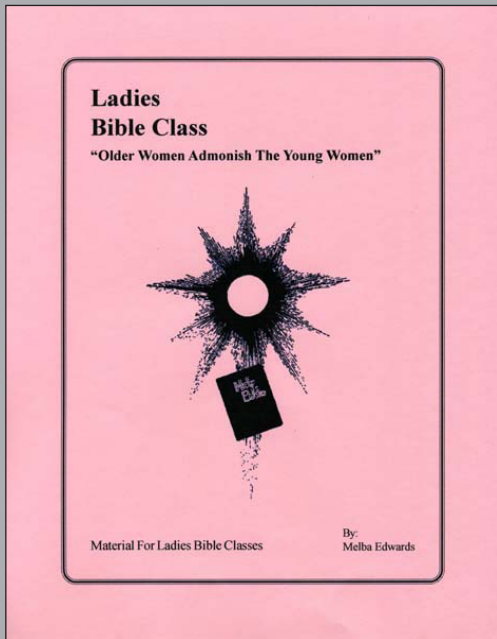
• **DON’T DIGRESS FROM THE LORD.** When there is a lack of study and no desire to attend the services, total digression from the Lord is the next step. A lot of Christians will just give up instead of fighting the good fight of faith or seeking guidance from a member of the congregation. Peter warns that the Christian who has been baptized into Christ and has digressed has more to lose (2 Pet. 2:20). Demas was a Christian who at one time accompanied Paul on his journeys (Col. 4:14, Phile. 1:24). Notice in 2 Timothy 4:10 that Demas had forsaken Paul. We must be careful as Christians not to drift in any way from the Lord by old habits (Phil. 3:13-14), evil associates (1 Cor. 15:33), worldliness (1 Jn. 2:15-17), or doubt (Rom. 14:23), just to name a few.

These will enable us to remain faithful not only after baptism, but unto death (Rev. 2:10). Let us always remember the words of Paul, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

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